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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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75¢

NMBAC SAYS AFTER RETURNING FROM DC TRIP

'Ban' on construction workers needs clarification

By BEA CABRERA
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corp. raised the supposed ban on construction workers under the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program during a series of meetings with federal officials last week in Washington, D.C.

Sablan

House Resolution 339 was adopted for fiscal year 2017 with several amendments. This opened up 350 CW slots, allocated slots for heath care workers and power

See BAN on Page 4

Woman killed after being hit by van

A 48-year-old Filipino died after being hit by a van early yesterday morning in Dandan.

The Department of Public Safety reported that at about 5:20am yesterday, police responded to an auto-pedestrian accident along Chalan

See WOMAN on Page 4

Maratita

OVER RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS FOR WGI

Vice speaker disappointed with OPM

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

House of Representatives vice speaker Janet U. Maratita (R-Saipan) expressed her disappointment yesterday when the Office of Personnel Management requested that the Legislature first confirm the intent and funding ability to retroactively address employees

See VICE on Page 4

CHRISTMAS PARADE OF LIGHTS BEA CABRERA
Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer comes alive as a Christmas float with lighted horns and eyes and a blinking red nose at the Christmas Parade of Lights held last Dec. 16 along Beach Road, Garapan.

See photo gallery on Page 15

INSIDE

LOCAL
After renaming the Fall semester to Fanuchånan earlier this year, the University of Guam celebrated the accomplishments of its graduates during the first Fanuchånan 2017 Commencement Ceremony.
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NATION
President Donald Trump said Sunday that he is not considering firing special counsel Robert Mueller even as his administration was again forced to grapple with the growing Russia probe.
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LIFE & STYLE
"Star Wars: The Last Jedi" rocketed to a debut of $220 million at the North American box office.
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Local

Imperial Pacific gives back during holidays

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA
Children pose for a picture after receiving presents from Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi Purpose Center last Sunday.

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC gave away 100 presents in celebration of the holidays last Sunday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi Purpose Center.

Some 100 toys were given to children that were chosen by the Youth Affairs Office, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation program.

According to Youth Affairs Office special assistant Shalaine Borja, the event is really important to the children that were chosen.

"A lot of times people think Christmas is jolly but for these kids, they just really deserve this," Borja said.

In behalf of the youth affairs office, Borja said they are really appreciative of the gesture made by the Imperial Pacific staff.

"We're very happy that IPI is actually doing this for our community," she said.

According to Borja, the Youth Affairs Office was allowed to pick 30 children, ages 0 to 12, to receive a gift from Imperial Pacific.

Borja said this was the first year that Imperial Pacific hosted an event like this and hopes that it will not be the last time they host a gift-giving event.

Imperial Pacific executive director for Corporate Social Responsibily, Geralyn DelaCruz, said that Imperial Pacific basically just wanted to give back this holiday season and encourage the idea of giving during the holidays.

"We just wanted to wish everyone in the CNMI a merry Christmas and we hope that by little gestures like this everybody else continues to give and just make it a happy Christmas for everybody," she said.

According to DelaCruz, Imperial Pacific has done something similar in the past year, but this year, they decided to bring all the children together, gather them in one place, and give each child their gifts at one time.

"We've done it every year just in different ways… last year, we donated to our partners and then our partners gave out the gifts, but this year we called our partners together and we had an event," she said.

DelaCruz said that Imperial Pacific would not only give out 100 gifts to children of the Commonwealth, but to children on Rota and Tinian, too.

Christmas Parade of Lights a success

By BEA CABRERA
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REPORTER

The annual Christmas Parade of Lights organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority last Saturday was a success. It brought families, friends, and the whole community along Beach Road in Garapan to catch the Christmas spirit and watch Christmas-themed floats.

According to MVA managing director Chris Concepcion it's been several years since MVA hosted the Christmas Parade of Lights.

"Every year, the parade features schools and government agencies on floats with lights and Christmas-themed decorations and music. It's always a great feeling to see the community come out to witness and enjoy the Christmas Parade," he said.

"School children and government agencies put a lot of effort into creating these unique floats and I'm sure they are humbled by the crowd that showed up," he added.

MVA recognizes that Christmas is the most important time of the year and an opportune time for the community and tourists to celebrate it as one.

"Christmas is a time of joy, giving, reflection, and peace. Traditionally, as a predominantly Catholic community, Christmas signifies the birth of Christ and has major religious significance. As an American commonwealth, Christmas has become a consumer-driven, festive holiday period, meant to be spent with family and friends," he said.

"As a tourist destination, Christmas is a time for our visitors who are primarily from Asia to enjoy a bit of the Chamorro, Carolinian, and American cultures, on gorgeous tropical islands with perfect weather, flashing lights, decorative Christmas trees, presents, and our warm hospitality found only in the CNMI," he added.

One of the biggest surprises at the parade was the mystery Santa Claus who turned out to be Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang.

"That was all the mayor's idea. I was surprised when I walked around the floats prior to the parade and was being called over by Santa Claus only to realize it was actually Mayor Apatang! That was a fun encounter," Concepcion said.

"Having the honorable mayor of Saipan attend with his staff, having him dressed up as Santa, really meant a lot to our team at MVA and to the community at large. Our mayor is a strong supporter of the tourism industry. We extend our gratitude to the mayor and his hardworking team for their participation in the Christmas Parade," Concepcion added.

MVA is going full blast with Christmas events as they invite everyone to join the festivities at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan on Dec. 23 and 30.

"I personally would like to recognize my hard working team at the MVA on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan for their dedication to the MVA and the tourism industry. Our work never ends. I look at my gray hair in the mirror sometimes and I am reminded of the stress we go through day in and day out, all for the people of the CNMI," he said.

"The MVA wishes the people of the CNMI a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for your continued support of the tourism industry. There will be ups and downs, as is normal in our industry, but what is constant is the teamwork that exists and must continue for the CNMI to keep moving forward in today's world," he added.

mazda HYUNDAI MITSUBISHI
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HYUNDAI

2017 ACCENT

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
7H232	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H247	YELLOW, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H251	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALL SOLD ELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H257	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H258	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H259	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALL SOLD LS	$3,500	$15,495
7H260	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY SOLD	$3,500	$15,495
7H261	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H270	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H272	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLO SOLD S	$3,500	$15,495
7H273	YELLOW, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H279	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495
7H283	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, ALLOY WHEELS	$3,500	$15,495

2017 VELOSTER

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
7H220	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK SOLD M, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$17,995
7H233	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BAC SOLD M, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$17,995
7H235	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$17,995
7H263	YELLOW, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$17,995
7H264	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$17,995

2017 TUCSON

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
7H309	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-U SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H310	BROWN, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H311	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-U SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H323	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP SOLD LOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H331	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-U SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H332	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H336	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H337	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H333	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H335	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995
7H338	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENG., AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$21,995

mazda

2018 MAZDA 3

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
8D058	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BAC SOLD M	$4,000	$16,995
8D059	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-U SOLD	$4,000	$16,995
8D060	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-U SOLD	$4,000	$16,995
8D061	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BAC SOLD M	$4,000	$16,995
8D062	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM	$4,000	$16,995
8D063	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM	$4,000	$16,995
8D023	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK SOLD , ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D025	SILVER, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BAC SOLD M, ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D026	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D037	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK- SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D039	BROWN, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BA SOLD AM, ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D040	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$5,000	$17,995
8D027	WHITE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, HATCHBACK	$5,000	$17,995
8D028	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK SOLD M, HATCHBACK	$5,000	$17,995
8D041	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, HATCHBACK	$5,000	$17,995
8D042	BLACK, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, HATCHBACK	$5,000	$17,995
8D014	GRAY, LEATHER SEAT, AT, HATCHBACK, GRAND TOURING	$4,000	$22,995

2017 MX-5

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
7D121	GRAY, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, CLUB SOFT-TOP	$8,000	$25,995
7D203	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, CLUB SOLD OP	$8,000	$25,995

2018 CX-3 SPORT

		DISCOUNT	PRICE
8D045	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-U SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995
8D048	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK- SOLD ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995
8D049	BROWN, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BAC SOLD AM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995
8D050	BLUE, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995
8D051	CERAMIC, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995
8D072	RED, 4-CYL. ENGINE, AT, BACK-UP CAM, ALLOY WHEELS	$4,000	$19,995

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Senate passes measure to provide qualified students with nursing scholarships

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate passed last week a measure that provides qualified nursing students with scholarships at the Northern Marianas College in order to stimulate nursing enrollments at the lone community college of the CNMI.

Palacios

Senate President Arnold I. Palacios' (R-Saipan) Senate Bill 20-71 passed the senate in the form of SB 20-71, SS1, SD1 with a vote of 9-0.

S.B. 20-71 provides students who are U.S. citizens; a resident of the CNMI for three consecutive years prior to enrollment; and agree to work as a nurse at the Commonwealth Health Center, Tinian Health Center, or the Rota Health Center the opportunity to secure one of 20 scholarships worth $8,000 at NMC.

The CNMI Scholarship Office would provide the funding, according to the bill.

In exchange, a student who graduates under the scholarship is required to work for CHC as a nurse for a period that is dependent on the number of years that the student was able to receive the scholarship.

An amendment by Sen. Paul Mangloña (Ind-Saipan) to require a three-year rate per year of scholarship assistance for students who wish to serve as nurses for private clinics passed the Senate unanimously as well.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. special assistant for policy, sustainability, and development Kaitlyn Neises said on behalf of CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña that the "forward-thinking policy" that is S.B. 20-71 was an investment to the labor pool of the CNMI and an investment to NMC.

NMC nursing program department chair Rosa M. Tudela was really appreciative of the Senate reviewing SB 20-71, a bill that could assist financially struggling students who choose to pursue a nursing degree at NMC.

Tudela recalls a student who has to work while studying, leaving him with only two hours of rest in between. She even shared her own experience at Minnesota as she was pursuing her nursing degree, where she was selling a liter of blood every three months to support herself.

Santos

According to Sen. Teresita Santos (R-Rota), who is also the chair for the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, S.B. 20-71 would open a "golden window of opportunity" for students who have the potential but lack the resources to pursue a nursing degree.

"We must help build our local workforce and provide them the necessary resources to successfully graduate in the field of nursing," she said in a statement.

Santos added that with the uncertainty of the CW-1 program, proactive measures must be taken in order to ensure critical services of the CNMI–such as the hospital–would continue to operate.

"We must recognize the vital role nurses play as the CNMI's health care system evolves to expand access to care, improve quality, and reduce costs," she said. "… It is incumbent upon us, as leaders of the CNMI to pay immediate attention to our health care professionals to ensure the survival of our public clinics and lone hospital."

S.B. 20-71 now heads to the House of Representatives for action.

BAN

From Page 1

plant operators, increased the education fee from $150 to $200 that will be used in the training of the local workforce, and the aforementioned barring of construction workers from renewing under the CW-1 program.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and NMBAC officers and board members met with senior officials of the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the nation's capital last week to get answers to questions and clarity to ambiguities in interpreting H.R. 339 and the future of the CW-1 program.

Among those discussed was the need to define who construction workers are and the execution of the construction workers ban included in H.R. 339.

In defining who construction workers are, NMBAC restated the language of H.R. 339 that it was clear that construction workers would be the ones losing permits and not other industries.

NMBAC chair Alex Sablan said that due to the ban on construction workers, there were instances where businesses who employ individuals to do general repairs are now being denied permits.

"These individuals are being denied permits because they fit under the U.S. Department of Labor overall under construction category which was used in H.R. 339. We have hotel maintenance workers who fix leaky faucets and CUC (Commonwealth Utilities Corp.) engineers who maintain the engines at our power plants who are in danger of losing their permits," he added.

NMBAC board member Gloria Cavanagh seconded Sablan by saying "Under no scenario would we have supported a ban on maintenance or general handy employees."

As for the application of the construction workers ban in H.R. 339, Cavanagh said "When the governor and the business community endorsed the initial language in 2015, we believed that the intent of the construction ban was only going to affect the additional CW permits requested for fiscal year 2017."

On the other hand, USCIS officials have a different understanding of the intent of H.R. 339 based on its author's statement on the floor of the House of Representatives on Aug. 15, 2017.

A USCIS official said that they used the second provision in the statement where "existing construction companies with foreign workers who have been employed prior to fiscal year 2016 will be able to continue to renew the CW-1 permits of those specific individual workers understood to have been 1,000-1,500 individuals."

USCIS said that this provision was the basis of the pre-October 2015 exclusion being tied to an individual employer. It speaks of companies being able to continue renewing the CW-1 permits only for those workers "who have been in their employ prior to fiscal year 2016."

The floor statements went further by saying that the construction permits ban should apply to "pending petitions" such as those petitions for fiscal year 2018 that had already been filed prior to August 2017 but have not been approved by USCIS.

USCIS informed NMBAC that there could have been an open question as to whether the ban would apply to petitions filed prior to H.R. 339's enactment but the (author's) statement clearly rules that out.

After the meeting, NMBAC member Perry Inos Jr. could not contain his shock after hearing the discussions.

"Clearly, we were shocked that our argument about the original intent as presented to us was completely wrong. We feel misled," he said.

Future of the CW-1 program

Torres and Sablan presented detailed reports to the officials and provided up-to-date information on the imminent impact of the 3,000-slot reduction in the CW-1 program for fiscal year 2018.

Every member of the NMBAC shared the different scenarios that result with every CW-1 denial on the CNMI economy, federally funded infrastructure projects and families.

The USCIS officials expressed their understanding on the plight of the CNMI economy and stated that they are bound by the laws passed by Congress. However, USCIS stands committed in assisting the CNMI in ways that they can.

First, USCIS said they will conduct a review of the denial process to ensure that permit applications that fall under construction applications shall be taken out before they start issuing denials.

NMBAC stated that some denials had already occurred, but USCIS said that they will conduct an internal review and get back to NMBAC.

Second, USCIS committed working with Torres on the legislation expected to be introduced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and while they are not allowed by law to influence legislation, they would provide technical assistance in the drafting process and make themselves available to answer inquiries,

Finally, USCIS pledged to work with the governor's office in expediting H2-B applications and stated that 30 days is the typical time spent in DHS after receiving from the U.S. Department of Labor.

DHS is actively working with the U.S. DOL to streamline the process and expedite applications by processing electronically.

WOMAN

From Page 1

Msgr. Guerrero in Dandan. The accident occurred on the eastbound lane in front of the Twin's Super Market.

The victim, a Filipina, age 48, sustained several severe injuries and was brought to Commonwealth Health Center emergency room for treatment. She was pronounced dead by an attending doctor at 5:35am.

The driver of a 2016 white Honda Odyssey was heading east on the outer lane driving at a speed of approximately 35 to 40 miles per hour when the victim entered the street.

The driver said he did not see the victim who was not in a designated crosswalk until a passenger in the car he was driving yelled "people!"

By the time he reacted, it was too late as his car already collided with the victim.

The accident is still under investigation and investigating officers have ruled out alcohol as a determining factor in the case.

VICE

From Page 1

stuck within-grade during the financial austerity measures of the early 2000s.

Maratita expressed her sentiments in yesterday's House Ways and Means Committee meeting.

She said she was "disappointed" with OPM's response to her Aug. 30, 2017 letter requesting for a list of all active and inactive employees whose within grade increases, or WGI, were frozen due to the financial austerity measures and a list of active and inactive employees who were promoted but whose salaries remained.

A letter dated Sept. 12, 2017 from OPM director Isidro K. Seman in response to Maratita's request said that although he supports the intent of Maratita's House Bill 20-120, which seeks to retroactively address the salaries of employees whose wages got stuck, he also warns of the financial repercussions of such a bill to the CNMI government.

"…I must strongly urge a prior in-depth review of the financial consequences of a full retroactive payment of all WGI due from the freeze on WGI's from 2002 to 2015 and the other related increases," Seman said, referring to the other related increases as a possible 5-percent frozen bonuses for those who reached Step 12 as a result of the WGI, claims for merit increases, and reallocation and promotion increases.

Seman estimates that payment amount to be "in the range of $15 million to $20 million with a significant pending current and future budget increase."

According to Seman, the herculean task, which was to be done manually, would be impossible to do by the end of the year. In his letter, Seman specified that it would take at least six months to accomplish and that OPM could not start the project as of the letter's writing in September 2017 due to the pending salary schedule conversion and the closeout of fiscal year 2017 at the time.

"This is not a simple task and cannot be done in a short space of time. It involves a manual review of every civil service employee file from the year 2002 to present," he said. "A listing cannot be provided at this time of all active and inactive employees who were affected by the freeze of the WGI benefit."

Seman also said that the task would require the involvement of five to 10 more times more people to address the concern due to the manual processing of information.

Citing these reasons, Seman requested that the Legislature "confirm their intent and funding ability for this project" before OPM starts working on the project.

In an interview, Maratita told *Saipan Tribune* that she believes the burden of seeking the proper funding to address the retroactive payments was a concern of the Legislature and not of the OPM.

"I'll worry about the funding," Maratita reportedly told Seman in a meeting early September 2017. "I spoke with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and he assured me that if [the situation] calls for his intervention, he would make sure that the department would assist," Maratita said, adding that the information from OPM was necessary for the discussion and passage of HB 20-120.

"Even if it's going to take six months, I'll wait," said Maratita, adding that there are constituents constantly contacting her regarding the matter.

According to the vice speaker, she have not met with Seman to discuss the matter since receiving his letter.

Due to the lack of information, the House Ways and Means Committee voted unanimously to set aside H.B. 20-120 and seek official comments from the OPM regarding the bill.

Settlement class, Fund members to get over $1,200 each

The NMI Settlement Fund said all Settlement class members and CNMI Fund members receiving an annuity would get an equal part from the $3.5 million bonus appropriated by the CNMI government last Friday.

An equal share of the bonus from a portion of the government's Casino Gross Revenue Tax is equivalent to $1,257.18.

The NMI Settlement Fund said the disbursement of the $3.5 million to the Settlement class members will be based on the membership as of Nov. 30, 2017, and in accordance with the Secretary of Finance's payment instructions as set forth below:

1. Retirees will receive an equal share with other retirees.

2. Survivors

a. Surviving spouses without qualified child(ren) will receive an equal share.

b. Surviving spouses with qualified children will equally share the bonus payment.

c. If no surviving spouse, surviving qualified children will equally share the bonus payment.

3. Retirees whose benefit payments are subject to a court-ordered divorce decree or judgment (including their non-retiree ex-spouses) will receive bonus payments based on the allocation set forth in their respective decree or judgment.

The bonus payments are not covered payments under the Settlement Agreement. Thus, all recipients will be responsible for reporting and paying taxes on the bonus payments. ***(PR)***

Smoke testing of sanitary sewer system in Koblerville

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be a smoke-testing on the sanitary sewer collection system in the Koblerville area (Adobo Dr., Escabeche Av. and Ilotes Wy.) beginning Jan. 9, 2018 through Jan. 12, 2018.

This smoke-testing is part of CUC's continuing effort to provide a safe, economical, efficient and environmentally sound SSCS.

The purpose of the smoke-testing procedures is to locate leaks, breaks, illegal connections, and other defects in CUC's SSCS. The process involves blowing a non-toxic smoke into the manholes of the SSCS. If there are any defects in the area, the non-toxic smoke will be emitted through the defect and documented by our SSCS team.

Smoke-testing procedures have been recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as an effective means of identifying problem areas in a SSCS. Eliminating system defects and illegal connections will help our community remain in compliance with the federal legislation regarding systems maintenance and preventing sanitary sewer overflows ("SSO").

The smoke is odorless, creates no fire hazard and will not enter your home or business unless you have defective plumbing or dried-up sink traps, or floor drains. The smoke-testing should only affect your property for approximately 15 minutes. Again, the smoke used for this test is manufactured strictly for this purpose, leaves no residuals or stains and has no lasting effects on property, humans, animals, or plant. Direct inhalation of the smoke may cause temporary minor respiratory irritation in some people, who suffer from respiratory issues.

Prior to CUC's smoke-testing, please pour two gallons of water in any seldom-used sinks and floor drains to prevent sewer gases, smoke, and odors from entering the premises. If smoke does enter your home during testing, immediately remove yourself from the building, notify the CUC Team that are conducting the test or call CUC's Wastewater Operations Division at (670) 322-5033.

If people in your building suffer from a heart condition, asthma, emphysema, or some other respiratory condition and are planning to stay in the building during testing, or if a person is bedridden, has a chronic illness or has difficulty understanding any part of this public notice, please notify the CUC Wastewater Operations at (670) 322-5032/3 to discuss your specific case.

CUC apologizes for any inconvenience resulting from this smoke testing project. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

44 YEARS AND COUNTING

Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc. management and staff usher in its 44th year of business in the CNMI with a toast. They are joined by president and CEO of Tokio Marine Pacific Insurance Ltd. Masaaki Morimoto and general agent management executive Mika Hasegawa during their company Christmas party held at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Chambre Lounge Bar last Thursday, Dec. 14.

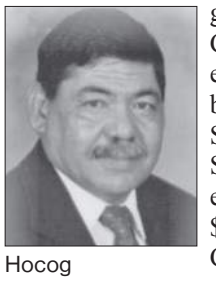
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hocog signs four bills into law

Acting governor Victor B. Hocog signed four bills into law last Friday, Dec. 15, 2017.

■ House Bill 20-131, HD1, to appropriate $3,375,000 from the Tobacco Control Fund to support and supplement awareness, detection, and prevention programs relating to cancer and other tobacco related illness. Authored by Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), the bill addresses concerns for the health of youth and the public as a whole. This bill becomes Public Law 20-32.

■ House Bill 20-10, SD1, to establish the Settlement Fund Revolving Fund Account and the Bond Payment Revolving Fund Account. Authored by Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), the legislation ensures and protects future payments to the CNMI retirees for each fiscal year. This bill becomes Public Law 20-33.


Hocog

■ House Bill 20-129, HD1, HS1, SD1, to address concerns of the Settlement Fund Trustee and to reserve funds generated from the Casino Gross Revenue Tax. Authored by Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), this act earmarks the first $22 million of the CGRT for the payment of the 25 percent of the class members full benefits, as well as bonuses. This bill becomes Public Law 20-34.

■ House Bill 20-145, which appropriates $22,000,000, set aside in the Casino Gross Revenue Tax, for the payment of the 25 percent of the Settlement Class Members full benefits and payment of a bonus to all retirees and beneficiaries. Authored by House Speaker Rafael S. Demapan (R-Saipan), appropriated funds shall not lapse and are available for expenditure without fiscal year limitation.

The appropriation is as follows:

■ $3.5 million to be distributed equally to all Settlement Class Members receiving an annuity; with the remaining balance to pay for the 25 percent of Settlement Class Members full benefits.

This bill becomes Public Law 20-35. ***(PR)***

Nicolas sworn in as newest lawyer in CNMI

The CNMI Supreme Court held a private attorney admissions ceremony for Jacqueline A. Nicolas. Nicolas was sworn in by the Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and joined by Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio, court staff, and close friends.

Nicolas graduated from the University of Riverside, California in 2009 with a double major in Political Science and Law & Society. After receiving a Juris Doctor Degree from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in 2014, Nicolas began clerking for the Kim-Tenorio in the CNMI Superior Court. During her clerkship, Nicolas developed a strong foundation in civil and criminal law by helping decide novel issues and establish legal precedence.

Kim-Tenorio said, "Jackie's contributions to the Judiciary will have lasting positive effects. Jackie was instrumental in building the foundation of the CNMI Drug Court without a blue print, which is no easy task. Specifically, she drafted proposed legislation, court rules, policies and procedures, and several grant applications. Jackie has also dealt with many different aspects of the Judiciary operations, all while performing her daily tasks as a law clerk."

Kim-Tenorio concluded by saying, "I am very happy for Jackie and look forward to her continued contributions to the community as an attorney."

For further information, contact the Supreme Court at 236-9805. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, caseworker Jaclyn T. Mendiola, director Georgia Cabrera, caseworker Dolores I. Benavente, Drug Court manager TaAnn T. Kabua Demapan, Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim Tenorio, Kristopher Laserna, Jacqueline A. Nicolas, Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Charity Hodson, and Bo Palacios.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB18-CHCC/HA-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 3, 2018 TIME: 1:00PM

VENTILATORS FOR RESPIRATORY CARE
HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION"

COPIES OF THE ITB PACKET MAY BE PICKED – UP AT CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY BIDS, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ PRISCILLA M. IAKOPO
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Resumed Regular Board Meeting is scheduled on **Wednesday, December 20, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan.** The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
a. Divisional Updates

IV. OLD BUSINESS
a. Garapan Annex Update
b. Personnel Matters

V. NEW BUSINESS
a. 2017 LIHTC Application
b. HOME Policies and Procedures Amendments
c. Loan Modification Request

VI. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

IGNACIO L. PEREZ
Chairman of the Board

Northern Marianas College
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 CK, Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Tel: (670) 237-6824 ext. 23/22 Fax: (670) 235-7601
E-mail: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NMC IFB 18-002

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF A NEW FILTRATION SYSTEM

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement and delivery of a NEW AQUATIC FILTRATION EQUIPMENT.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, commencing TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH, 2017 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

For Bidder located outside of the CNMI may request a copy of the IFB via fax (670) 235-7601 or email to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Bid Packages are due no later than 10:00 a.m., JANUARY 19, 2018, at Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. You may request a copy of the NMC IFB 18-002 packet via fax (670) 235-7601 or e-mail to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through the USDA-NIFA authorized under the Hatch Act, as amended August 11, 1955, award # 2016-31100 (Regular).

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the proposer to prepare a response to this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the proposer. All submittals shall become the property of NMC.

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

A Land Grant Institution accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and by The Senior Commission for Colleges and Universities of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges

Northern Marianas College
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 CK, Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Tel: (670) 237-6824 ext. 23/22 Fax: (670) 235-7601
E-mail: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NMC IFB 18-003

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF NEW COMPUTER SYSTEMS FOR CREES SAIPAN, ROTA AND TINIAN STATIONS

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement and delivery of NEW COMPUTER SYSTEMS for CREES Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, commencing TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH, 2017 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

For Bidder located outside of the CNMI may request a copy of the IFB via fax (670) 235-7601 or email to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Bid Packages are due no later than 10:00 a.m., JANUARY 22, 2018, at Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. You may request a copy of the NMC IFB 18-003 packet via fax (670) 235-7601 or e-mail to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through the USDA-NIFA authorized under the Hatch Act, as amended August 11, 1955, award # 2016-31100 (Regular).

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the proposer to prepare a response to this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the proposer. All submittals shall become the property of NMC.

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

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2007 RAV4
4-cyl, Auto, 4WD, Beige, STK#U17-0137T
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NOW $9,899*

2016 Yaris, 4-Door Hatchback
4-cyl, Auto, FWD, STK#U17-100R
WAS $15,699*
NOW $15,199*

2015 Prius C, Hatchback
4-cyl, Auto, Blue, STK#U17-090L
WAS $15,999*
NOW $15,499*

2007 FJ Cruiser
SUV, V-6, Manual, 6-spd, 4WD, Red, STK#U17-133T
WAS $17,599*
NOW $16,599*

2017 Yaris L Hatchback
4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Red/Black, STK#R17-028F
NOW $16,999
NOW $16,999*

2017 Yaris Hatchback
4-Door, 4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Gray, STK#R17-026F
NOW $17,399*

2016 Corolla LE
4-dr, 4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Gray, STK#U17-103R
WAS $19,299*
NOW $18,599*

2016 Corolla LE
4-dr, 4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Green, STK#U17-114R
WAS $19,899*
NOW $19,199*

2016 Corolla LE Sedan
4-cyl, Auto, FWD, White, STK#U17-119R
WAS $19,999*
NOW $19,299*

2015 Prius HV, 4-dr Hatchback
4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Silver, STK#U17-102R
WAS $21,999*
NOW $20,999*

2012 Sienna LE
4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Red, STK#U17-092T
WAS $22,799*
NOW $21,799*

2016 Camry LE
4-dr, 4-cyl, Auto, FWD, Gray, STK#U17-106R
WAS $22,699*
NOW $22,199*

2013 Toyota Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 6-spd, 2WD, Silver, STK#U17-126T
NOW $23,499*

2016 Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring Sport
4-cyl, Auto, AWD, White, STK#U17-122T
WAS $26,399*
NOW $24,899*

2011 Tacoma DC 4X4
V6, Auto, Green, STK#U17-091T
WAS $25,699*
NOW $24,999*

2016 Tacoma Access Cab
SR, 4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, White, STK#U17-130L
NOW $25,999*

2016 Tacoma Access Cab
SR, 4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, White, STK#U17-129L
NOW $26,199*

2015 Tacoma Double Cab
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Black, STK#U17-132T
NOW $26,999*

2015 Highlander LE
4-cyl, Auto, 6-spd, 2WD, Gray, STK#U17-021F
WAS $29,999
NOW $27,799*

2016 Highlander LE, FWD
4-cyl, Auto, Blue, STK#U17-086R
WAS $30,999
NOW $28,499*

2014 Tacoma Double Cab
4WD, V6, White, STK#U17-128L
WAS $31,399*
NOW $28,699*

2015 Highlander LE Sport
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Pearl White, STK#U17-135P
NOW $29,399*

2014 Tacoma DC
4x4, V6, Auto, Red, STK#U17-111T
WAS $30,599*
NOW $29,599*

2015 Tacoma Double Cab
V-6, Auto, 5-spd, 4WD, Red, STK#U17-131T
WAS $30,299*
NOW $29,899*

2016 Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Silver, STK#U17-109R
NOW $30,299*

2014 Tacoma Double Cab
4WD, V6, White, STK#U17-127L
NOW $30,399*

2016 Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Silver, STK#U17-108R
NOW $30,599*

2016 Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Blue, STK#U17-116R
NOW $30,599*

2016 Highlander LE Sport
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Gray, STK#R17-025F
NOW $30,799*

2016 Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 2WD, Gray, STK#U17-107R
NOW $30,799*

2016 Highlander LE SUV
4-cyl, Auto, 6-spd, 2WD, Black, STK#U17-125R
NOW $30,999*

2015 Toyota Sienna LE
8-pax Van, Red, 6-Cyl, STK#U17-050R
WAS $34,499*
NOW $30,999*

2015 Tacoma DC
V6, Auto, 4WD, Blue, STK#U17-097T
WAS $33,399*
NOW $32,499*

2012 4Runner Trail Edition
V6, Auto, 4WD, Gray, STK#U17-096P
WAS $34,899*
NOW $33,899*

2016 Tacoma TRD 4x4 Double Cab
Long Bed, Gray, STK#U17-051T
WAS $40,799
NOW $37,899*

*On approved credit. Conditions apply. See dealer for details. Fees not included. Mileage may vary.

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NMBAC to address SHRM meeting Thursday

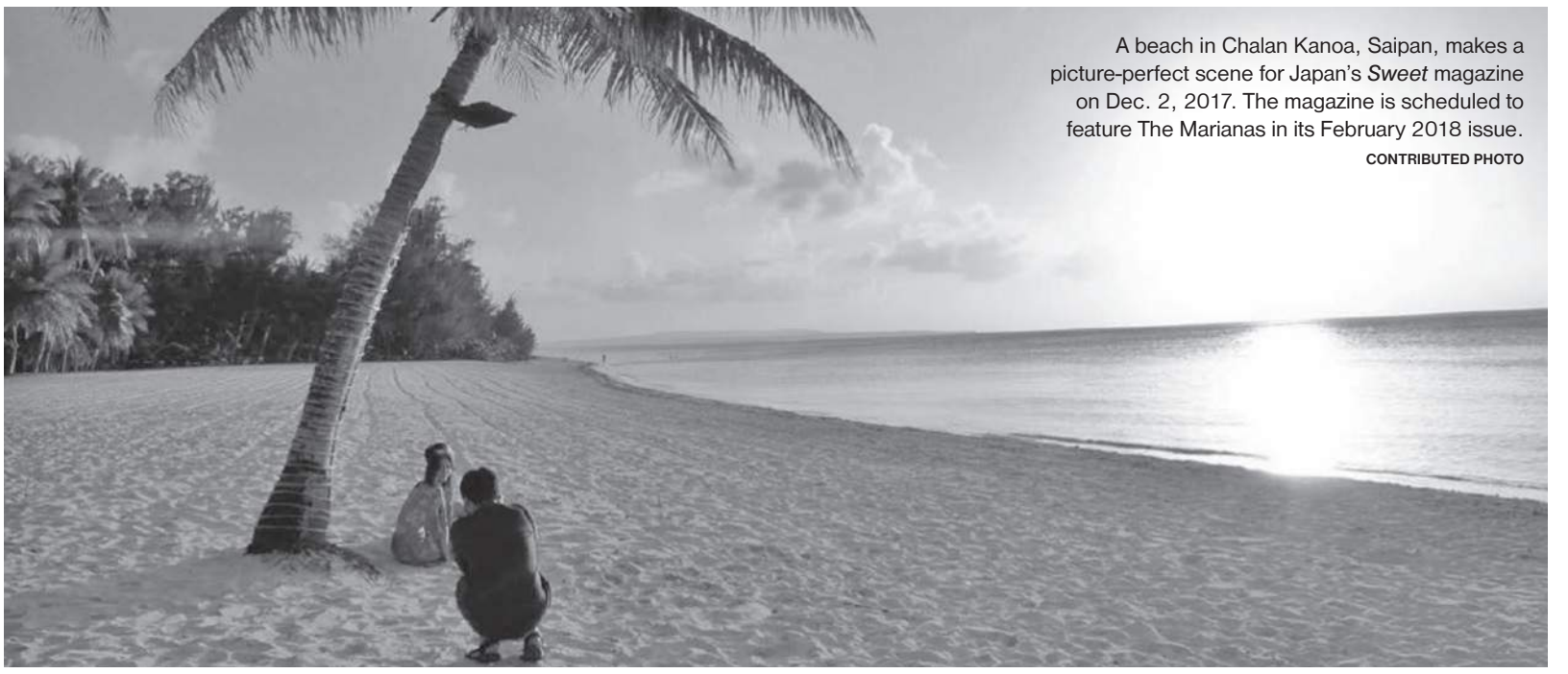
The Society for Human Resource Management NMI Chapter will host the Northern Marianas Business Alliance Council at a Dec. 21, 2017 joint SHRM, Chamber of Commerce, and Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands membership meeting regarding their recent trip to Washington, D.C. The members of the council will discuss the content and results of their meetings in Washington and the anticipated consequences.

This lunch meeting will be held at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Ballroom on Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017, from 11:30am to 1:30pm.

The presentation is open to the public and will be an invaluable opportunity for employers, managers, and HR professionals and staff to learn more about the results of the council's meetings in D.C. Please join SHRM at its monthly luncheon to collaborate with fellow HR professionals and to discuss a problem that affects all businesses. The speakers will provide an opportunity for questions.

The presentation includes a lunch buffet at the cost of $20 for SHRM/Chamber/HANMI members and $30 for non-members. Seats are limited, so reserve your seat by contacting Penny Jones by e-mail at penelope.jones@hyatt.com or Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com or by telephone at 323-5867/68.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. The society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, and more than 575 affiliated chapters. The NMI Chapter is affiliated with the national organization. For more information about the NMI Chapter, you can visit their website at http://nmichapter.shrm.org. ***(PR)***



A beach in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, makes a picture-perfect scene for Japan's *Sweet* magazine on Dec. 2, 2017. The magazine is scheduled to feature The Marianas in its February 2018 issue.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Japan's *Sweet* magazine captures the offerings of The Shack and other Saipan eateries during their familiarization tour of The Marianas on Dec. 1-4, 2017.

Japan's *Sweet* magazine preps Marianas coverage

Japanese magazine *Sweet* was in The Marianas on Dec. 1-4, 2017, to discover the sweetest photo locations and attractions of this resort destination.

The magazine is scheduled to feature Marianas' beaches, hotels, activities, shopping and food in nearly 300,000 copies of its February 2018 issue targeting trend-following women in their 20s and 30s.

"Young office workers are still one of the largest source markets for The Marianas in Japan, so the upcoming article of Sweet magazine is both targeted and timely," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Based on our visitor exit surveys, about half of our Japanese visitors purchase their travel tickets one or two months in advance, so this February coverage also aims to increase bookings during the traditionally low travel season between Lunar New Year and summer."

Shopping sites to be featured include T Galleria, I Love Saipan, and Joeten Hafadai Shopping Center. Culinary sweets and more discovered at Swirls, Herman's Bakery, The Shack, Loco & Taco, and Surf Club Saipan. Activities included stand up paddling with Seawind Ocean Marine Sports Club, trekking and snorkeling at Forbidden Island with Marianas Trekking, and stargazing with Saipan Sea Ventures. Other featured sites were Paupau Beach, Micro Beach, Sugar Dock, and Ladder Beach.

The group lodged at Hyatt Regency Saipan. The Marianas will receive an estimated $18,000 in ad exposure through the media tour. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sweet magazine models hike to Forbidden Island with Marianas Trekking on Dec. 3, 2017. The magazine is scheduled to feature The Marianas in its February 2018 issue.

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING NOTICE

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Special Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 9:00 a.m.** in the MVA Conference Room, San Jose Professional Building Saipan, MP 96950. The public is informed that the Regular Board Meeting scheduled for December 19, 2017, has been rescheduled to December 20, 2017.

MEETING AGENDA

1) **Preliminary Matters**
   1. Call to Order
   2. Roll Call
   3. Adoption of Agenda
   4. Adoption of Minutes
      a. Regular Board Meeting – October 23, 2017

2) **Public Comments**

3) **Committee Reports**
   1. Finance –
      a. Fund Status Report

4) **New Business**
   1. Off-Shore Offices Contract Renewal
   2. Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Paseo de Marianas Improvement Project
   3. House of Chamorros Sponsorship

5) **Old Business**
   1. MOU for Garapan Heritage Trail – No Cost Extension
   2. MOU for Rota Mt. Sabana 360 Lookout Project – No Cost Extension
   3. MOU for Tinian Observation Deck Project – No Cost Extension
   4. NMIFA Soccer Training Center

6) **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
7) **Executive Session**
8) **Adjournment**

/s/ Gloria Cavanagh
Chairwoman, MVA Board of Directors

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
MVA-RFP-18-2008

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

For: HAPPY CHILDREN IN PARADISE CAMPAIGN
20th ANNIVERSARY SAIPAN-DA BACKPACKS

Submission /Closing Date: **January 22, 2018** Time: **3:00 p.m.**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the Scope of Work on or after **December 18, 2017, at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan,** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified courier services by January 22, 2018, and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the Commonwealth must notify the MVA/ Ms. Brenda Repeki in writing of their intent to submit a proposal in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. Participants outside the **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** must submit a **Notice of Intent** by any mode of written communication including facsimile at+1-670-664-3237 or email to brepeki@mymarianas.com, and must be received by 5 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time on **January 22, 2018.**

All questions regarding this RFP must be sent to Ms. Brenda Repeki at brepeki@mymarianas.com or faxed to +1-670-664-3237, **no later than 5 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time on January 5, 2018.**

/s/ Christopher J. Nelson
Acting Chairperson, Board of Directors

/s/ Christopher A. Concepcion
Managing Director

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance December 21st, 2017 at 9:30 am at the Mayor of Saipan Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Ladera Center Building, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
   1. Roll Call
   2. Adoption of Agenda
   3. Adoption of Minutes from November 22nd, 2017
II. Public Comments
III. Reports
   1. Administrator
   2. Chair
   3. COMMITTEES
      a. Committee on Awards
      b. Committee on Appeal/ Deferments/Forbearance
      c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
      d. Committee on Program and Development
      e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs
IV. Old Business
V. New Business
   1. Spring 2017 Application Status
   2. NMTI Request for Reconsideration (Open Enrollment)
VI. Executive Session – Appeals (closed)
VII. Misc.
VIII. Next Meeting
IX. Adjournment

Note: Meeting may continue the following day should the need arise.

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICE OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL.: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK PACIFIC, LTD., Plaintiff, -v- MATTHEW A. OOKA, RITA M. OOKA, and the SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, Defendants.) CIVIL ACTION NO. 13-0238

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS, MATTHEW A. OOKA AND RITA M. OOKA:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 522, Saipan, MP, 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated November 15, 2017 by order of the Court:
/s/
Clerk of Court

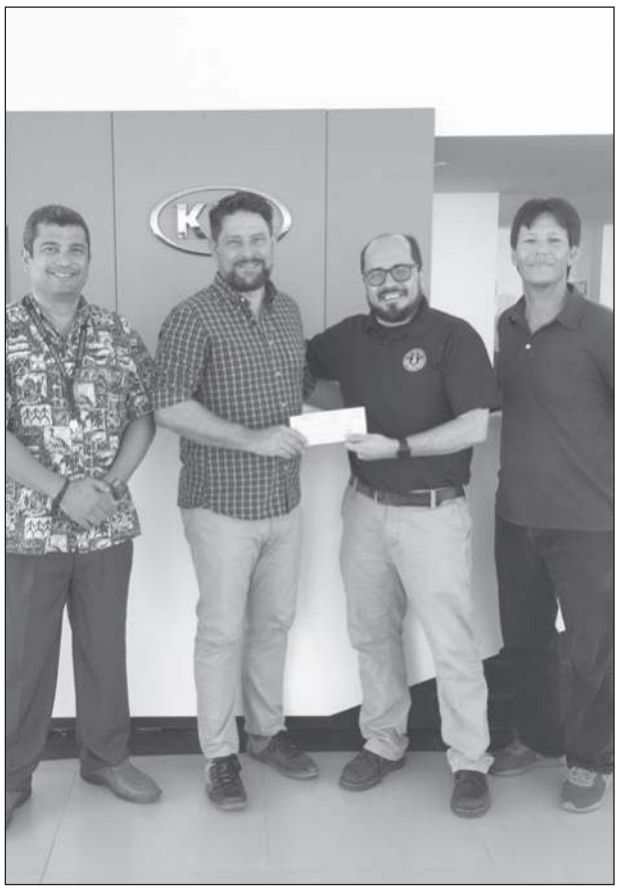
Supreme Court vacates summary judgment for prejudgment interest award

The Supreme Court last Friday issued its opinion in Isla Development Property, Inc. v. Steve K. Jang, 2017 MP 13. The court vacated the trial court's order granting summary judgment as to prejudgment interest and remanded the case for a determination of prejudgment interest that considers appellee Isla Development Property, Inc.'s damages.

Steve K. Jang owed Isla Development $29,000 in back rent. In order to pay off this back rent, Isla Development and Jang executed a promissory note payable in six months, due on or before October 2014. Jang did not pay the note on time. Eight months later, Isla Development sued to collect the $29,000 principal owed, as well as prejudgment interest and attorney's fees. The note provided that failure to pay any part of the principal before the note was due would allow Isla, the note's holder, to exercise all rights and remedies it possessed as well as to declare immediately due the whole unpaid principal balance and accrued interest. The parties disagreed as to what this part of the note meant. The trial court found the note provided for prejudgment interest and applied the Commonwealth's post-judgment interest rate of nine percent, ordering Jang to pay the $6,328.36 in prejudgment interest that had accrued.

The Supreme Court reinterpreted the promissory note's provisions. First, the court found the provision at issue provided for interest that accumulated before and up to Jang's default, or pre-default interest. The note did not provide for interest that accumulated between Jang's default and the entry of judgment, or prejudgment interest. Because the note did not include language allowing for collection of prejudgment interest, the only way Isla would be able to collect prejudgment interest from Jang would be as a damage award that compensated Isla for losses it suffered as a result of Jang's delay in payment. The trial court had incorrectly interpreted the note and the record on appeal did not include any evidence as to the damages Isla suffered. Without this information, the Supreme Court was unable to decide the amount of prejudgment interest owed. The court sent the case back down for the trial court to reanalyze.

The court's full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme17.html. ***(PR)***



'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Recently, Herman's Modern Bakery and Joeten Motors presented Education Tax Credit contributions to Mount Carmel School. School president, Galvin Deleon Guerrero, received the contributions from Herman's Bakery representative Michael Guerrero (right) and Joeten Motors representatives (from left to right) Boss Alvarez, Matt Deets, and Norman Peter Tenorio.

Coast Guard, Kiribati, good Samaritans rescue two fishermen

HONOLULU—Two fishermen were rescued by good Samaritans Wednesday following a coordinated search effort in the South Pacific.

Lebeta Tiem, 27, and Erikite Teanaki, 28, were rescued by the crew of the cargo vessel Cape Odyssey at 4:14 p.m. They will rendezvous with the motor vessel Arotobwa Wednesday night and be transferred to Christmas Island, Republic of Kiribati. The fishermen were initially located by a Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules airplane crew during a search Tuesday.

"This case illustrates the importance of the search and rescue network in the Pacific Ocean and the skills of our personnel who developed successful search plans with very little input," said Capt. Robert Hendrickson, chief of response Coast Guard 14th District. "This is the epitome of a remote area with vast distances for response assets to cover."

The two fishermen reportedly departed Washington Island in a 14-foot aluminum boat to fish west of the island and failed to return prompting the search. The Coast Guard received a request for assistance from the Search and Rescue Office on Tarawa Monday. With limited information personnel in the Coast Guard Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Honolulu developed search plans incorporating environmental data and drift modeling for multiple days at sea.

A SafetyNet broadcast was issued to alert mariners in the area to keep a sharp lookout and report any sightings. The Hercules crew was launched.

Tuesday afternoon the Hercules crew located the boat approximately 125 miles (107 nautical miles) southwest of Washington Island, Kiribati. The vessel was visually acquired and the crew were reported to be waving their arms with t-shirts in hand. The Hercules crew dropped a data marker buoy approximately 100-yards from the vessel and successfully dropped a search and rescue package containing food, water, a VHF Radio, and a search and rescue Transponder. With the VHF radio, despite a language barrier, the Hercules crew was able to establish communication with the fishermen and alert them a vessel was en route to their area.

The Hercules crew retuned to Hawaii to refuel and change crews before departing to re-aquire the vessel and vector in the crew of the Cape Odyssey.

Weather on scene was reported as seas of 2 to 5 feet with 17 mph winds and good visibility.

The Arotobwa is a 143-foot vessel from the Republic of Kiribati. The Cape Odyssey is a 980-foot Panamanian-flagged bulk carrier, participating in the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System.

Born out of the 1912 RMS Titanic disaster, AMVER leverages the ability and willingness of merchant mariners aboard commercial ships to participate in search and rescue when nearby and in lieu of other vessels that may be much farther away. Today over 22,000 ships from hundreds of nations participate. The success of AMVER is directly related to the extraordinary cooperation of ships, companies, SAR authorities, communication service providers and governments in supporting this international humanitarian program to protect life and property at sea. In the vast Pacific Ocean this system is vital to saving lives. ***(PR)***

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

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Victor B. Hocog, Lt. Governor

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The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality to ensure compliance with the CNMI Pesticide Regulations requires that pesticide shipments that are detained or denied entry and impounded shall pay a storage fee.

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For more information please contact BECQ Pesticide Branch at 664-8500 or 664-8511.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Now is the time for the US to improve sexual harassment laws

Allegations of sexual harassment against President Trump already were on the record before women who have accused the president renewed their claims. Trump, caught on tape long ago offering some pretty harassing thoughts about women in general, immediately took to Twitter to deny the claims, branding them, of course, "FAKE NEWS." Unfortunately, the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape doesn't help Trump's position.

And now, more than 100 members of Congress, including North Carolina's 4th District Rep. David Price of Chapel Hill, have called for an investigation.

Said Price: "President Trump will not silence the voices of the 17 women who have accused him of sexual misconduct. I'm proud to join @HouseDemWomen in their call for a congressional investigation into allegations against @realDonaldTrump."

The explosive disclosures of harassment claims – some admitted, some not – against prominent men including Charlie Rose and Matt Lauer have ignited a new dialogue about sexual harassment, and perhaps have struck fear into the hearts of men who may have believed they got away with it and now fear they may not. More and more women seem emboldened to tell their stories.

One constructive suggestion of a way to respond comes from Chapel Hill attorney Laura Noble, who says a 30-year-old U.S. Supreme Curt ruling that sexual harassment fell under gender discrimination protections was weak and not clear.

She told WRAL, "It's a 53-year-old statute written before the time of cellphones and electronic devices." And the law seems to put up a pretty steep hill for someone to prove harassment, and judges, she said, have a lot of leeway in terms of how they interpret such claims. Women who make such claims – average women, not Hollywood stars with power – take a big risk, she said.

"The consequence for them is usually that they're going to have something adverse happen to their career, or they're going to get fired," she said.

Noble wants the victims of harassment to have more time to report it, and she believes laws don't need to vary from state to state. She said, "If groping in North Carolina is considered sexual harassment, then it should be considered sexual harassment in Iowa or California."

That's exactly right, of course. And there will be no better time than now, when so many accusations are coming to light, to push members of Congress to clarify harassment laws nationwide by passing clear and precise federal laws that specify what harassment is.

She thinks that there should be no laws requiring mandatory arbitration in harassment cases, and that's right, for it limits the options of those who claim harassment. And Noble wants a specific sexual harassment law in this state and others.

Now is the time for the United States to address sexual harassment laws, not just because there are sensational cases in the news or claims of several women against the president, but because action is overdue – way overdue.

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Net neutrality repeal the latest way Team Trump has ripped up media landscape in less than a year

By DAVID ZURAWIK
The Baltimore Sun

Hardly a day goes by without President Donald Trump attacking some part of the mainstream media for what he calls fake news. These attacks, usually in the form of early-morning tweets, are in turn much discussed in the media throughout the day especially on cable news. Some days, it seems as if Trump's tweets are all that is discussed.

But there is another, quieter campaign being waged by members of the Trump administration. And this one is radically changing the media landscape and our information ecosystem as it wipes out decades of congressionally-mandated regulatory controls intended to protect consumers.

As dangerous to democracy as Trump's overt attacks on the press are, this second front is the one that threatens to choke off the free flow of information crucial to a functioning democracy. From loosening ownership limits in local TV, to rolling back net neutrality, Team Trump is making the media world safe for a few giant conglomerates to control the kind of information citizens have access to, while at the same time pumping disinformation, propaganda and lies out of the White House. The potential is enormous for confused citizens who do not know where to turn for the kind of trustworthy, verified information needed to make sound choices about their lives.

What's is most shocking is how much structural change has already been wrought in less than a year since Trump's inauguration.

Ajit Pai, who was elevated to chair of a now Republican-controlled Federal Communications Commission by Trump, has been the White House's tip of the spear on media change in 2017. This past week, he landed another major blow to media as we have known it when the FCC ended net neutrality on a straight party line vote of 3-2 Thursday.

Net neutrality isn't the most inherently exciting topic.

"The only two words in the English language more boring than net neutrality are 'featuring Sting,'" is the way comedian John Oliver put it on an episode of his HBO show, "Last Week Tonight." (I think he's being unfair to Sting. I kind of liked "The Last Ship.")

But Oliver has shown with several deft analyses of Pai's actions as head of the FCC that he understands better than most that the loss of net neutrality is no laughing matter.

Net neutrality demands that all content and traffic be conveyed equally on the internet. Those rules were put in place by the FCC in 2015 at the behest of the Obama administration, and the public seems to like them.

A University of Maryland poll released Tuesday found 83 percent of respondents opposed to the repeal of net neutrality rules. And that is after they were given arguments on both sides of the issue, which were vetted by experts. Is there anything in the world of media that 83 percent of Americans agree on?

The survey of 1,077 registered voters was conducted by the Program for Public Consultation at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy.

"A decision to repeal net neutrality would be tacking against strong headwinds of public opinion blowing in the opposite direction," Steven Kull, program director of the program, said in a statement.

Thursday's FCC decision will allow giant internet service providers like Comcast, AT&T or Verizon, for whom Pai once worked, to control cost of content and pace of traffic, slowing or blocking some content providers, allowing fast lanes for others. For example, Comcast, which owns NBC, can now move an on-demand stream of an NBC show to you faster, while delaying or providing less broadband space for a series from a competitor like CBS or a film from Netflix.

How long can you look at that little wheel in the middle of your screen spinning and spinning but not actually loading the desired film before you give up?

Sinclair bid to be biggest could also make it most hated TV company in America

Like cable companies, internet service providers can now use the distribution pipelines they control to drive you to their content while restricting that of competitors. Or, they can charge content providers like Netflix more for the ability to provide their customers faster download speeds.

Big companies like Netflix will probably pay for faster delivery, but what about those who can't afford the toll?

Companies like Comcast and Verizon can now all but slow some content by smaller producers — like, say, a small website that features media reporting and analysis critical of them. I wonder how long it will take in coming moths for progressive platforms that are often critical of corporate media, such as "Media Matters" or "Democracy Now," to load on my computer.

With their new control, internet service providers can also charge

See NET on Next Page

LITERARY NOOK

NO QUIBBLE, NO QUALMS

A quartet on quantum qualities

By JOEY "PEPE BATBON" CONNOLLY
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

LIMERICK FOR 7 DEADLY SINS and 7 HEAVENLY VIRTUES

sonnets on seven deadly sins and heavenly virtues
commonly found in government and church pews
conflict and hypocrisy found in some of those
who mainstream and evangelic Christianity espouse
regardless of the most obvious contradictory views

SEVEN DEADLY SINS MINUS ONE

LUST - who do you love? who can you trust?
deep pockets? big deals? big bust? late night lust
ENVY - over and over he had it all, she had more
out it poured, Damocles sword, kids next door
GLUTTONY - don't be afraid of it eat till your made of it
pork roast, fried doughnuts, sugar shweets, muttony
GREED - more of this more of that more gravy more
fat, more money more more that will endure for sure
PRIDE - goeth before a fall, humpty dumpty straddling
the non existent wall brags to all that he won't fall
SLOTH - ain't gonna work today, no prayers, no cares
just hanging around upside down playing on the stairs
MEMORY - loss, can't seem to remember the last one
gives me some more time to have a little bit of fun
those first six sins have sometimes lost sometimes won

RECLAMATION of SINS LEADING TO DAMNATION

(my id and ego do a self examination of my current situation)
GULA (gluttony) doing the hula getting ready to go whole hog
on the whole roasted pig sputtering on the spit just can't quit
LUXURIA/ FORNICATIO (lust, fornication) lacking trust
loving a luxurious situation with a lack of individuation
AVARITIA (avarice, greed) I'm getting it all at top speed
wanting more than I could want, getting more than I need
SUPERBIA (pride, hubris) me, myself, and I, what is
more important than this? maybe giving my self a kiss
TRISTIA/ACEDIA (sorrow, despair, despondency, sloth)
feeling bad, not for you but me, woe is me, Bonjour Tristesse,
IRA (the Latin word for wrath) think irate, he got irate that was
his sad fate. The late great American humorist Will Rogers wrote,
" People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing."
VAINGLORIA/INVIDIA (vainglory, envy) he worked hard, got rich,
I'm pissed, he was fortunate, it should be me the one fortune kissed.

LESSONS OF LUST – PAST PRESENT and FUTURE

In lust we trust there is no love
or caring about others friends brothers sisters
lust subverts propriety affects fathers and mothers
permeates our society an unnecessary evil
perpetuated by the mischievous miscreants
practiced by slaves to the devil, are these
sins of flesh? are spiritual sins less grievous
in Dante's Purgatorio
the penitent walks into flames
to purge himself of earthly shame
in Dante's Inferno unforgiven souls
with lust are blown coast to coast
no more bragging and boasting
on camera or texting about sexting.

7 HEAVENLY VIRTUES-VIOLATIONS, CITATIONS, SITUATIONS

"Virtue is the moral strength of the will in obeying the dictates of duty."—Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

CHASTITY (Castitas) our Vice President (no pun intended) Michael Pence seems to be one of the most prominent preachers of chastity in the U.S. today. Pence is the opposite of his boss who on camera brags about a sin on the opposite philosophical side of chastity, who also supports and endorses someone running for political office who like him has been accused of violating heavenly virtues and committing many deadly sins.

TEMPERANCE (Temperantia) from Carrie Nation forward temperance in all things seems to be a healthy companion of longevity

CHARITY (Caritas) we give so others may a better life live

DILIGENCE (Industria) as sore tired muscle pain lingers from our legs up to our bony fingers

PATIENCE (Patientia) parents and teachers use daily common sense practicing patience, and patience requires patience

GRATITUDE (Humanitas) the milk of human kindness, for life, love and the pursuit of happiness something all Americans believe and profess

HUMILITY (Humilitas) having the ability and availing the possibility of letting go of the ego and admitting we don't know instead of braggadocio

(These seven heavenly virtues with their original Latin names in parentheses appeared in an epic poem "Psychomachia" written by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (d. 410 A.D.) The comments and rhymes are mine.)

Black voters are leading a Democratic surge

By ALBERT R. HUNT
Bloomberg View

Albert R. Hunt is a Bloomberg View columnist. He was the executive editor of Bloomberg News, before which he was a reporter, bureau chief and executive Washington editor at the Wall Street Journal.

Well before the Republican Roy Moore suffered his humiliating defeat last week in deep-red Alabama, Democrats had thought they saw a path to victory in the state's special Senate election.

Their strategy was to coax turnout among African-American voters to 25 percent of the electorate, with more than 9 in 10 of those voters going for Democrat Doug Jones. The formula also envisioned Jones getting over a third of the white vote while an unusually high 3 percent of voters, including many Republicans dismayed by Moore, would cast write-in ballots.

Jones did win on Tuesday to become the first Democrat elected to the Senate from Alabama since Richard Shelby in 1992. (Shelby switched parties two years later.)

But Jones's path to victory didn't quite follow the road map. He fell slightly short of the target for white votes. Write-ins were less than 2 percent.

The Democrats overcame those setbacks with a huge African-American surge. Exit polls showed that black voters comprised at least 28 percent of the total turnout, with 96 percent of them favoring the Democrat. This defied predictions by politicians and the press of a low black turnout in an unusual December election in a state where the African-American vote isn't usually decisive.

Democrats think the strong showing for Jones among black voters demonstrates a level of political enthusiasm that will endure well after the departure of former President Barack Obama.

Republicans, of course, hope it doesn't. They prefer to think of Alabama as a one-time event pitting a weak Republican against an unusually competitive Democrat. They're right that some conservatives shunned Moore, an extreme right-winger credibly accused of sexually assaulting teenage girls who seemed nostalgic for the era of slavery. And that blacks had special reason to admire Jones, a moderate Democrat who was well known as the former U.S. attorney who convicted two Ku Klux Klan terrorists in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four black girls.

But that explanation overlooks another factor: President Donald Trump. Hostility to Trump among black voters is as strong a political motivator as the initial excitement nearly a decade ago about the prospect of electing Obama. In this fall's NBC News-Wall Street Journal poll, 94 percent of African-Americans disapproved of Trump. That's a record high for a politician.

It's easy to see why. Five years ago, Trump led the charge among people who claimed falsely that Obama wasn't born in the U.S. In rhetoric and record, Trump has been the most anti-black president in memory. Some of his top lieutenants, notably his former campaign manager Steve Bannon, are embraced by white nationalists as the champion of their cause. After white supremacists and neo-Nazis rioted in Charlottesville, Virginia, last summer, Trump declared that there were "very fine people on both sides." He went out of his way to attack the National Football League players, many of them black, who knelt as a social protest during the national anthem.

And he created a voter-fraud commission that's a thinly veiled effort to provide justification for laws that make it harder for members of minority groups to vote. (The commission hasn't met since September and is now under investigation by a government watchdog agency.) Many Trump administration proposals for budget and health-care cuts would hit blacks especially hard.

The African-American voting surge was unmistakable in Alabama, but there's evidence of a similar if less dramatic wave elsewhere. It played a role in the Virginia gubernatorial election in November, the first major post-Obama contest, leading to a bigger-than-expected Democratic blowout.

There are other signs of the Democratic wave. As Democrats were winning in Alabama, Republicans were holding on to a state senate seat in northwest Iowa by only 10 percentage points. A year earlier, Trump carried the same district by 41 points.

In Alabama, Virginia and elsewhere, younger voters and suburbanites are also swinging Democratic. For Democrats, Trump is the gift that won't stop giving.

NET

From Page 10

consumers more for access to the fast lanes on their toll roads setting up a tiered structure where your "free" access to the web will get you to none of the premium content you want in a timely fashion.

Sound familiar — like the cable service you are now paying $200 a month for with all sorts of fees? Not surprising, since the internet service providers who will benefit most from Pai's actions are the same companies sending you those cable bills. If you want to get a sense of how you are going to like the brave, new world of the internet without net neutrality, ask yourself how happy you were the last time you called Verizon ort Comcast about service or your cable bill.

An FCC spokesperson responded to Sun requests for comment with an email that quoted a statement the agency issued in response to the University of Maryland study.

"This is a biased survey that, among other things, makes no mention of the role that the Federal Trade Commission will play in policing anticompetitive or unfair conduct by Internet service providers. Earlier polling by Democratic pollster Peter Hart showed that most Americans believe that utility-style regulation of the Internet is harmful, and this is the regulation that the Restoring Internet Freedom order will eliminate."

The spokesperson's email did not respond to another question I asked in my phone message about Pai allegedly joking at a public dinner about being a puppet for Verizon.

As to the Hart poll in 2015, one of its key findings is that only one out of four adults even knew what "net neutrality" meant. Starting from that premise, their opinions about regulation might not be that informed.

As for the Federal Trade Commission, it would likely only act after the fact — not lay out and enforce specific guidelines as the FCC had historically done with insistence since the Communications Act of 1934 that broadcasters operate "In the public interest." Its expertise in deceptive advertising and business practices, not media monitoring.

As criticism of his proposed rollback mounted in recent months, Pai has made himself available to Fox News to talk about net neutrality.

Zurawik: Nothing funny about the propaganda machine Team Trump is building

On "Fox & Friends" last month, Pai said what the internet needs is "light touch, market-based regulation, not micromanagement from Washington, D.C."

But it is more like no-touch as Pai looks to be systematically dismantling FCC regulatory powers granted by Congress in the Communications Act, which grew out of a belief that government was the only entity large and powerful enough to effectively police media corporations — and the FCC, with the power to grant and revoke broadcast licenses, was the agency to do it.

Moves like the one made Thursday can have huge consequences. In 1987, Ronald Reagan's FCC repealed the Fairness Doctrine, which for 38 years required broadcasters to cover controversial issues of public importance in a balanced way by offering contrasting viewpoints on those issues. That political move paved the way for the premiere in national syndication of Rush Limbaugh's radio show in 1988 a media force that played key roles in making us such a divided nation today.

Pai is working out of the same deregulation playbook not only as he rolls back net neutrality on the internet, but also wipes out rules designed to assure diversity and community-based ownership in local television.

Since assuming the chairmanship under Trump, he has led the FCC in repealing rules aimed at creating diversity and localism in station ownership. Prior to the changes, no one company could own stations reaching more than 39 percent of U.S. households. If Maryland-based Sinclair Broadcast Group's proposed purchase of Tribune Media is approved it will reach an estimated 72 percent.

There is a depressing pattern to American communication history the past 150 years. Each time a new communications technology comes along, it is heralded for its ability to connect us in new and wonderful ways — promising even greater democracy. Remember how radio was going to do that, then TV and then cable? All kinds of new cable channels were promised. But before long, a few giant companies wound up owning the wires that brought those channels into our homes through monopoly deals with local governments.

Stretching all the way back to the telegraph and telephone, the pattern finds entrepreneurs and early inventors bought or squeezed out by corporate monopolies that start colonizing and controlling access. And suddenly, it's all about profits, not democracy. Service declines; rates rise.

The internet was supposed to be the one communications technology that didn't fit that sad pattern.

Thursday morning in a room at FCC headquarters in Washington, it joined the list. Let's hear it for the FCC and the American way.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.
▲88° ▼78°

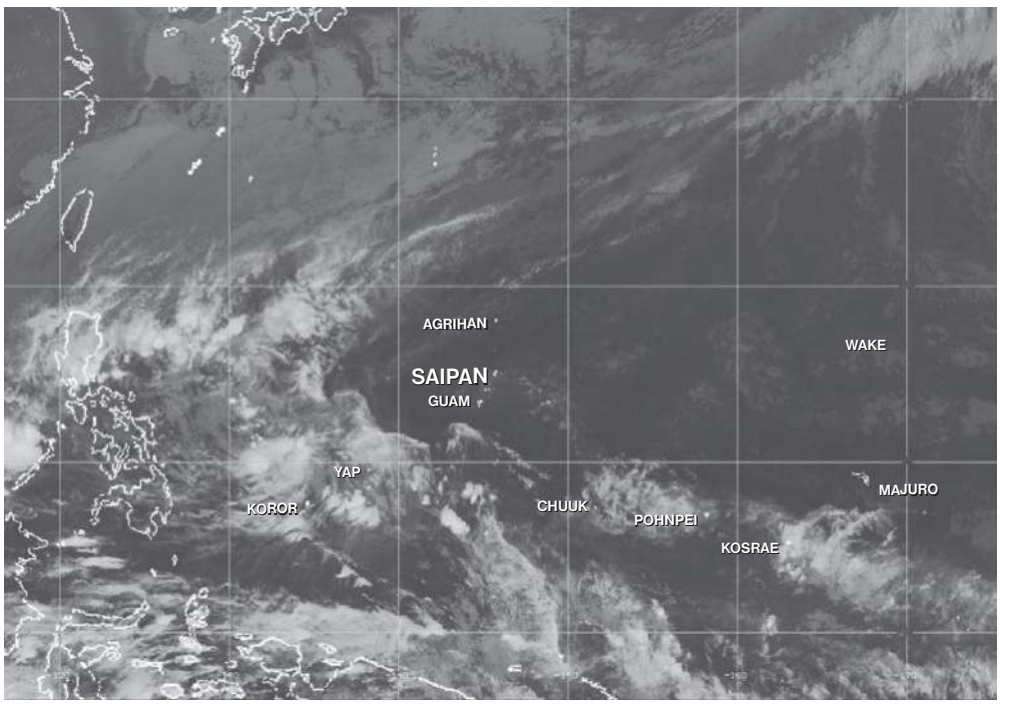
WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.
▲88° ▼78°

THURSDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:55 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Skies over the Marianas are partly cloudy, with moderate to fresh trade winds and isolated showers. Combined seas are generally 6 to 8 feet at the buoys. Well south of the region, little is left of JTWC invest area 97W. But out to the east, a trade-wind disturbance is producing isolated thunderstorms.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Showers	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Showers	86° / 79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	39° / 19°
Hong Kong	Sunny	68° / 54°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	79° / 69°
London	Partly Cloudy	43° / 39°
Los Angeles	Sunny	68° / 49°
Manila	Showers	86° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	86° / 63°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	79° / 72°
New York	Partly Cloudy	53° / 39°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	48° / 34°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 37°
Busan	Sunny	43° / 28°
Rome	Sunny	50° / 30°
Salem	Showers	63° / 52°
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 47°
Seoul	Mixed	34° / 19°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	46° / 37°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	60° / 43°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:20 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.28
9:16 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.85
2:49 PM	LOW TIDE	1.16
7:30 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.82

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:37 AM	5:50 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Thursday	6:38 AM	5:51 PM
Friday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:05 am	6:41 pm	-
Wednesday	7:53 am	7:29 pm	-
Thursday	8:39 am	8:18 pm	-
Friday	9:24 am	9:08 pm	-
Saturday	10:07 am	9:58 pm	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 6, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	2, 3, 4
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
TW308	2:35am	6:20am	6, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:30am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:00am	10:25am	1
JD396	4:50pm	8:15pm	4

SAIPAN-NANJING (NKG)

XP889	4:45pm	10:30pm	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 3, 4, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	1, 2, 3
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	8:05pm	1:35am+1	5, 6
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:10am	3:30pm	4
JD395	10:05pm	5:30am+1	7

NANJING (NKG)-SAIPAN

XP888	9:35pm	4:00am+1	1, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:20pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express, XP XTRA Airways; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Community Guidance Center

BLUE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

"One Day at a Time"

A MESSAGE OF HOPE & WELLNESS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

At any time of the year, and especially during the holidays, people can get struck with depression. While feeling sad is normal, persistent feelings of sadness and a loss of interest in doing things once enjoyed may be a sign of a more serious problem. Depression is a common medical illness that can negatively affect a person's thoughts, feelings and behavior. This mood disorder which ranges from mild to serious can be treated, unfortunately some people choose destructive ways to cope; some use alcohol or drugs, others become socially isolated, and sadly some have even taken their life. It is critical that people get the help they need to lift out of a depressive state. If you or someone you know is feeling depressed and hopeless, reach out to a professional.

There are ways to support someone you care about who is dealing with depression. Here's a list of some things you can do to start the process of hope and recovery:

1. Learn about the Condition
Reading up on the illness will help you feel more in control of the situation and give you more patience to tolerate the confusing or frustrating symptoms.

2. Help Them Identify and Cope With Sources of Stress
Stress contributes to depression and also interrupts healthy coping strategies. Help them identify sources of stress and ways to reduce it. Small changes, like deep breathing techniques or taking short walks, can go far in reversing the effects of stress.

3. Remind them of their Strengths
Remind them of their strengths, using examples of a time in their lives they showed courage, compassion, integrity, and overcame challenges.

4. Laughter Heals
Laughter soothes and triggers the release of "feel good" brain chemicals to increase one's ability to reduce stress.

5. Let them know that this too will pass
It is a simple statement of truth that holds the most powerful healing element of all: hope.

6. Listen, Listen, Listen. And Listen.
A basic and powerful way to connect with others is to listen from the heart. Allow them to talk and express how they feel without interruptions or judgment. It's better to say nothing and just listen warmly than to say the wrong things. For example, Do say, "I am here for you." Don't say, "Others have it worse than you." Do say, "You matter to me." Don't say, "Life isn't fair."

7. If they are suicidal, do not leave them alone
Do not leave him or her alone if they are depressed and feeling suicidal or having thoughts of harming themselves. Having someone around is important. Bring your loved one to a professional for an evaluation if you fear they would hurt themselves or others.

8. Eat and Sleep Well. Get physical.
Basic nutrients and a good healthy diet is important when feeling depressed as there is a tendency to skip meals or lose appetite. Incorporate enough physical activity, however big or small. Physical activity combats depression.

9. Small acts of kindness can go a long way
A gesture to let them know you care can go a long way, like share a favorite dish or fresh fruits, call to say hello, or offer to take him or her out to a movie or dinner. Kind words to let them know you love them and that they matter can go a long way.

RECOVERY CLINIC SERVICES

The Community Guidance Center's Recovery Clinic, a substance use disorder treatment program, offers services to support individuals and families affected with substance use disorders with essential information and coping skills to pursue health, wellness, and recovery. On October 31, 2017 the Recovery Clinic launched Intensive Outpatient (IOP) Treatment Services for individuals affected by moderate to severe substance abuse disorder. Through the Matrix Model, participants and their families are provided structured, evidenced-based treatment for 16 weeks and 36 weeks of continuing care. Alongside the Matrix Model, CGC offers peer support and 12 Step facilitation which builds and empowers participants and their families in the ongoing recovery process. Other coordinated groups to compliment and support treatment include exercise and physical activities, arts and culture, and a spiritual component. If you are or know of someone who is struggling with substance use issues, please contact our office for more information.

DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 13	Completion of the NAADAC Foundations of Addiction Practice Training (80 Hrs)
December 15	Blue Fridays: Wear Your Blue Island Wear to support the Blue Ribbon Campaign
	KKMP Recovery Show 7:30am-8:30am
December 16	NSA Safe & Sober Christmas Youth Softball Tournament (Prevention Unit)
	Prevention Unit at Christmas in the Marianas
December 19	Health Walk (TLC)
	5:00PM Registration - Starting at 5:30PM
	Oleai Pavillion
December 22	Blue Fridays: Wear Your Blue Island Wear to support the Blue Ribbon Campaign
	KKMP Recovery Show 7:30AM-8:30AM
December 23	Prevention Unit at Christmas in the Marianas
December 27	Recovery Clinic in partnership with DYS: Village Community Forum at Kagman Community Center. 6:00pm - 7:00pm
December 29	Blue Fridays: Wear Your Blue Island Wear to support the Blue Ribbon Campaign
	KKMP Recovery Show 7:30am - 8:30am
December 30	Prevention Unit at Christmas in the Marianas

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation: Community Guidance Center, express warmest thoughts and best wishes for the holidays. May peace, love and prosperity be with our families throughout the CNMI.

For more information, please call Community Guidance Center at 323-6560/61

Substance Abuse Prevention Services Unit	Recovery Clinic	Transitional Living Center (TLC)	Systems of Care (SOC)	Wellness Clinic
(670) 323-6560/61	(670) 323-6560/61	(670) 323-4060/63	(670) 664-4604/05 to 09	(670) 236-8752

CGC-Prevention Services Unit cgc_prevention cgc_prevention

This message is brought to you by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in partnership with the CHCC:CGC - Substance Abuse Prevention Services Unit.

University of Guam Fanuchånan (Fall) 2017 graduates show their Triton Tridents before the Commencement Ceremony at the UOG Calvo Field House last Sunday.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

UOG welcomes 280 graduates during commencement ceremony

After renaming the Fall semester to Fanuchånan earlier this year, the University of Guam celebrated the accomplishments of its graduates during the first Fanuchånan 2017 Commencement Ceremony held at the UOG Calvo Field House yesterday afternoon. UOG conferred 280 degrees—216 undergraduate degrees and 64 graduate degrees, making this the largest graduating class of any Fall or Fanuchånan Commencement Ceremony.

Nearly half of the total graduates came from the UOG School of Business and Public Administration, which conferred 105 undergraduate degrees in Business Administration, Accounting, Public Administration, and Criminal Justice and 30 graduate degrees from its Master of Public Administration and Professional Master of Business Administration programs.

An 'inheritance and a challenge'

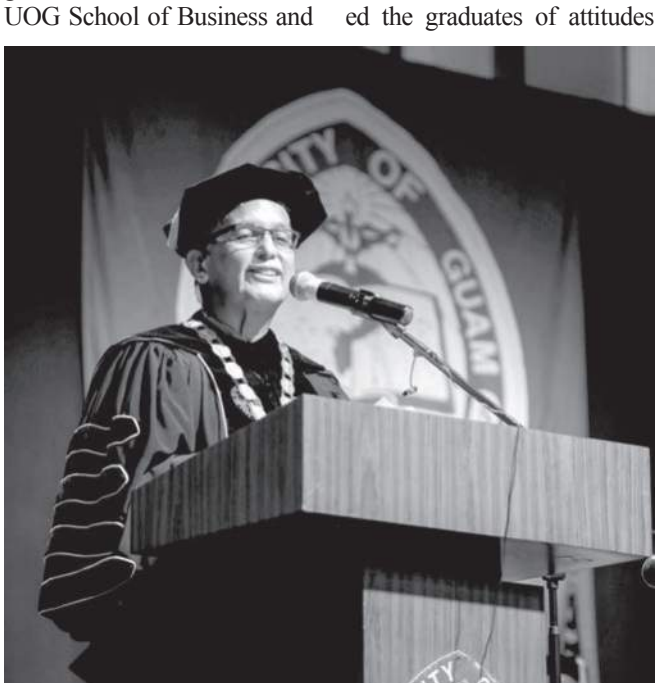
In his welcoming remarks, UOG president Robert Underwood shared examples of UOG alumni making a difference in the world, and reminded the graduates of attitudes and values that the university passed on to them: "responsibility, commitment and problem-solving."

"This is your year and this is your opportunity to create earthquakes large and small, to challenge the status quo, to not let elected officials shortchange you or your education. Do not let alternate facts and misrepresentations carry the day. Bring integrity and honesty to the spirit of concern for others into everything we do," said Underwood.

Commencement speaker

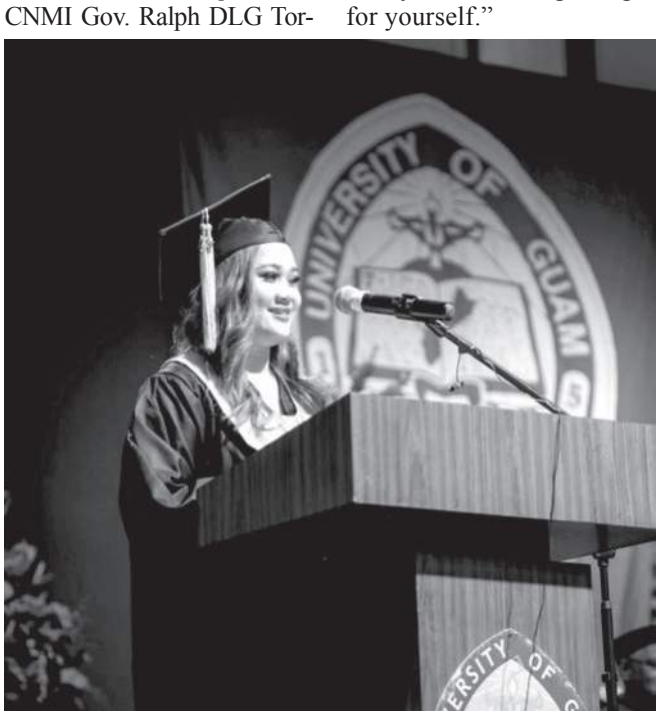
CNMI Gov. Ralph DLG Torres was the commencement speaker and challenged the graduates to fight for themselves and their futures.

"You are stronger today than you were yesterday," Torres said. "The only thing that prevents you from going from where you are now to the greatness you are capable of is your own willingness to fight for yourself—to do the hard work that is necessary, to turn those weaknesses into strengths, and to realize that no one will be willing to fight for you more than you are willing to fight for yourself."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

UOG president Dr. Robert A. Underwood delivers welcoming remarks during the Fanuchånan (Fall) 2017 Commencement Ceremony at the UOG Calvo Field House last Sunday.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The UOG Fanuchånan (Fall) 2017 valedictorian is Dayanara Flores, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Gov. Ralph DLG Torres addresses the graduates during the Fanuchånan (Fall) 2017 Commencement Ceremony at the UOG Calvo Field House last Sunday.

Dayanara Flores named valedictorian

Class valedictorian Dayanara Flores, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Education, told the crowd that her community—friends, family, and her fellow Tritons—were the backbone that led to her reaching this milestone in life. She encouraged the Fanuchånan Class of 2017 also to thank those who helped them realize their dreams.

"So if there's only one thing I can take with me after today, it's that we are truly one community," Flores said. "I learned that even if I was going through some really tough times, it was the support I received from the people around me that made me realize that life isn't so bad. So let's thank these people—thank you to our professors, our friends, our peers, and our amazing families for providing us the love and support we needed. Now let's take that 'Thank You' and extend it to those in our community. Let's extend our hand to our whole island, our neighboring islands, countries, and to the world."

For more on the Fanuchånan 2017 Commencement Ceremony, visit www.uog.edu/fanuchanan-2017-commencement. The ceremony was streamed live and can be viewed on the official UOG Facebook page. ***(PR)***

2017 Christmas Parade of Lights

PHOTOS By BEA CABRERA

A girl dons her Christmas tree costume at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

Children in Santa Claus costumes ride the giant sleigh float at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

Girls aboard a latte stone-inspired Christmas float at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

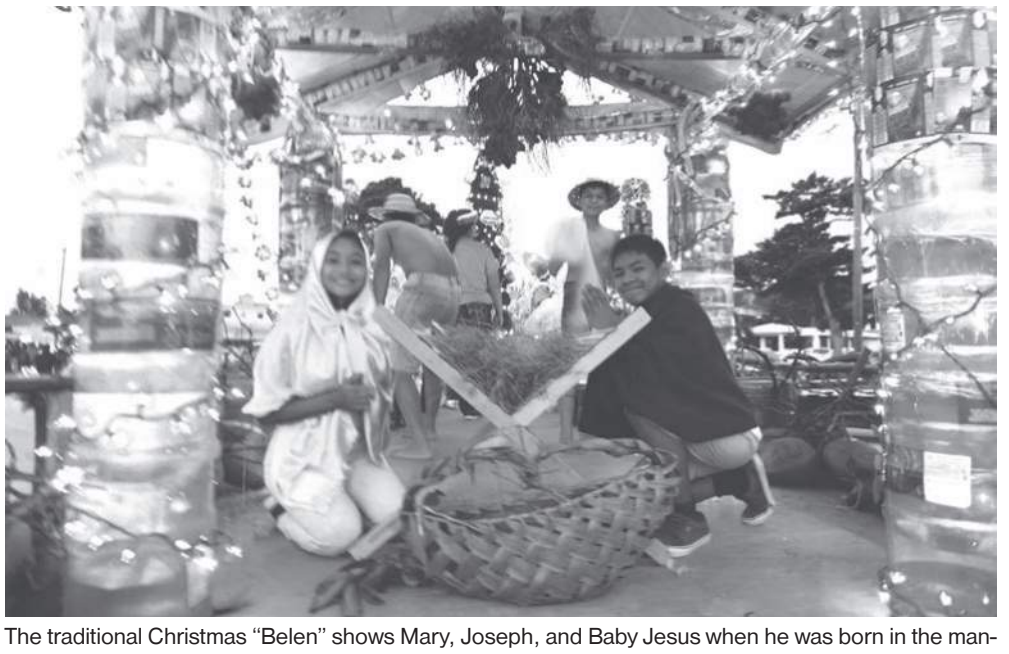
Girls greet everyone a Merry Christmas in jingle bells costumes at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

Mrs. Santa Claus on board a float with a big boot behind her at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec.16.

A truckload of Christmas characters with Frosty the Snowman dancing and waving at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

Another Christmas decorated latte stone was featured in one of the floats at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

A lighted Christmas tree carefully decorated to bring cheer and joy at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.



The traditional Christmas "Belen" shows Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus when he was born in the manger at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

The mystery Santa Clause was Mayor David M. Apatang that delighted children with his hearty laugh and readiness for a photo op with spectators at the Christmas Parade of Lights on Beach Road, Garapan last Dec. 16.

Business

Why GOP tax plan could mean cuts in state, local services

WASHINGTON (AP)—It's a tax provision that could prove costly for schools, police forces, drug treatment centers and other state and local public services.

The sweeping tax overhaul embraced by President Donald Trump and Republican lawmakers would impose a $10,000 limit on the combined sum of property and state and local income taxes that a household could deduct. The $10,000 cap will help pay for corporate and personal tax cuts totaling $1.5 trillion over the next decade.

Conservatives have argued that unlimited state and local deductions amount to a federal subsidy for the wealthy in high-tax states like New York, New Jersey and California. But many middle class families in those states face disproportionately high housing costs and depend on deducting their state and local taxes. These households could soon pressure states and localities to ease their burden by cutting taxes—which would likely force cuts to social programs and public services.

Some Republicans in high-tax states resisted their party's cap on local and state deductions. Two of them— Reps. Darrell Issa of California and Lee Zeldin of New York— oppose the overall tax measure because of the likelihood that it would hurt their constituents. And despite Republican arguments to the contrary, high-tax states already tend to send more money to Washington than they receive back in federal spending.

"On balance, this bill remains a geographic redistribution of wealth— taking extra money from a place like New York to pay for deeper tax cuts elsewhere," Zeldin said. "This bill chooses winners and losers in a way that could have and should have been avoided."

AP

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas, is pursued by reporters in the Capitol after signing the conference committee report to advance the GOP tax bill, in Washington, Friday, Dec. 15, 2017.

More than 73 percent of homeowners in Westchester County just north of New York City face property taxes alone that exceed $10,000. This means they couldn't deduct any state or local income taxes. The same is true of half of Manhattan homeowners, a quarter of those in San Francisco, 17 percent of suburban Chicago homeowners and 10 percent of those in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C., according to figures tracked by Attom Data Solutions.

The limit on the deduction could lead taxpayers there to demand lower taxes or to reject any additional funding requests for state pensions, schools, public safety and health services. What's more, a separate provision in the Republican tax bill would no longer subsidize employers that help their employees pay their commuter costs. This change will likely increase the cost of public transit for riders.

The overall tax bill would impose new costs on many taxpayers that would outweigh any savings on federal taxes, argues Matthew Chase, executive director of the National Association of Counties.

"We don't see it as a net gain for taxpayers," Chase said. "They want to strangle our revenue sources."

The National Education Association, a teachers union, estimated that the cap on state and local deductions could put at risk $15.2 billion in annual public school spending, or $304 per pupil. Marc Egan, the association's director of government relations, said the change could discourage local governments from investing in education and might eventually depress economic growth.

"We're always making the case that investing in education is a common-sense way to grow the economy," Egan said. "Why Congress continues to resist that on a number of fronts is a mystery."

Even as Republicans in Congress decided to cap the state and local tax deduction for households at $10,000, their tax bill will continue to allow corporations to deduct their state and local taxes as a business cost.

Since the federal income tax code was introduced in 1913, Americans have been allowed to exclude the taxes they pay to state and local governments. Roughly a third of taxpayers have enough expenses to itemize their deductions. And nearly all who do so deduct their state, local and property taxes. These deductions have helped make it affordable for cities and states to fund school systems, health care services and police forces, while making it more acceptable for a community's richest households to pay taxes that can help the poorest.

The Republican tax bill nearly doubles—to $24,000—a family's standard deduction, which goes to taxpayers who don't itemize their deductions. So there would automatically be fewer people who would deduct their state and local taxes. But in addition, many households in high-tax states could no longer itemize their deductions because of the new cap on state and local taxes. This could reduce the perceived value of these taxes and incentivize voters to push for lower state and local taxes—a stated goal of some conservatives.

Bitcoin futures slide after trading debut on CME

NEW YORK (AP)—Another security based on the price of bitcoin, the digital currency that has soared in value and volatility this year, began trading on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange on Sunday.

The CME Group, which owns the exchange, opened up bitcoin futures for trading at 6 p.m. EST on Sunday. The futures contract that expires in January opened higher at $20,650, then declined steadily. The futures were trading at $18,895 at 10:30 p.m. EST.

The CME futures, like the ones that CME competitor the Cboe started trading last week, do not involve actual bitcoin. The CME's futures will track an index of bitcoin prices pulled from several private exchanges. The Cboe's futures track the price of bitcoin prices on the particular private exchange known as Gemini.

Each contract sold on the CME will be for five bitcoin.

As bitcoin's price has skyrocketed on private exchanges this year, largely under its own momentum, interest on Wall Street has grown. The virtual currency was trading below $1,000 at the beginning of the year, and rose to more than $19,000 on some exchanges in the days leading up to its debut on the Cboe and CME. Bitcoin was trading at $18,786.00 Sunday night on Coinbase.

But the growing interest in bitcoin has raised questions on whether its value has gotten too frothy. The Securities and Exchange Commission put out a statement last week warning investors to be careful with any investment in bitcoin or other digital currencies. Further, the Commodities Futures Trading Commission has proposed regulating bitcoin like a commodity, not unlike gold, silver, platinum or oil.

Futures are a type of contract where a buyer and seller agree on a price on a particular item to be delivered on a certain date in the future, hence the name. Futures are available for nearly every type of security out there, but are most familiarly used in commodities, like oil wheat, soy and gold.

Bitcoin is the world's most popular virtual currency. Such currencies are not tied to a bank or government and allow users to spend money anonymously. They are basically lines of computer code that are digitally signed each time they are traded.

A debate is raging on the merits of such currencies. Some say they serve merely to facilitate money laundering and illicit, anonymous payments. Others say they can be helpful methods of payment, such as in crisis situations where national currencies have collapsed.

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics. Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.

2 bosses who don't care for each other

Q I seem to be caught between two high-level managers who really don't like each other. One is a director, the other is a vice president, and I am an assistant to both. Whenever the director stops by my desk to chat, she makes critical remarks about the VP, which puts me in an uncomfortable position.

The VP doesn't talk about the director, but he often forwards her emails with a comment like "Isn't this ridiculous?" I usually just respond with an LOL, but I'm not sure if that's appropriate. How can I handle this so that I get along with both of them and keep my job?

A How sad that these childish executives have trapped you in the middle of their silly spat. But since you're not in a position to correct their conduct, you must master the art of being responsive without taking sides.

Your VP's snarky emails are the easier task, because it's probably safe to ignore them. When he shoots off these caustic little messages, odds are that he doesn't expect a reply. In fact, he may forget about them as soon as he hits send.

The director's conversational zingers present a greater challenge. While you needn't reply to every comment, remaining silent will sometimes seem rude. In those instances, just acknowledge the remark with a brief, neutral response, and then immediately change the subject.

Let's say, for example, that the director criticizes a presentation made by the vice president. To avoid agreeing or disagreeing, you might simply say "Well, that's interesting. By the way, I need to ask you about this expense report."

Should either of these juvenile managers push you to take a stand, calmly point out that your job is to assist both of them to the best of your ability. Perhaps that will encourage them to reflect on their behavior and start acting like professional adults.

Q My friend "Mary" is undergoing medical treatments which cause her to be sensitive to odors. The perfume worn by several of our coworkers makes her sick to her stomach. When she told our supervisor, he said there was nothing he could do.

After Mary went to human resources, the HR manager directed the supervisor to tell people to stop wearing scents. This helped initially, but now some have resumed their old habits. Instead of enforcing the ban, our supervisor moved Mary to an isolated section of the office. She feels like an outcast, but hates to keep complaining. What should she do?

A I've said it before, and I'll say it again. People should never wear perfume to work. With the exception of those who sell them, nobody has a job in which fragrances are necessary. Many co-workers and customers find the odor offensive, and some are actually allergic.

Given Mary's medical condition, eliminating scents might be considered a requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Perhaps this is why the HR manager issued a clear directive that your inept supervisor is now choosing to ignore.

Since Mary is reluctant to renew her complaint, perhaps you and other sympathetic co-workers could appeal to human resources on her behalf. That should result in a quick resolution of the problem.

Nation

Trump: I'm not considering firing special counsel Mueller

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Donald Trump said Sunday that he is not considering firing special counsel Robert Mueller even as his administration was again forced to grapple with the growing Russia probe that has shadowed the White House for much of his initial year in office.

Trump returned to the White House from Camp David and was asked if he was considering triggering the process to dismiss Mueller, who is investigating whether the president's Republican campaign coordinated with Russian officials during last year's election.

The president answered: "No, I'm not."

But he did add to the growing conservative criticism of Mueller's move to gain access to thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration, yielding attacks from transition lawyers and renewing chatter that Trump may act to end the investigation.

"It's not looking good. It's quite sad to see that. My people were very upset about it," Trump said. "I can't imagine there's anything on them, frankly. Because, as we said, there's no collusion. There's no collusion whatsoever."

AP

President Donald Trump speaks to members of the media on the South Lawn at the White House in Washington, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017, after returning from Camp David in Maryland.

On Saturday, the general counsel for the transition group sent a letter to two congressional committees arguing Mueller's investigators had improperly obtained thousands of transition records.

The investigators did not directly request the records from Trump's still-existing transition group, Trump for America, and instead obtained them from the General Services Administration, a separate federal agency that stored the material, according to the group's general counsel.

A spokesman for Mueller said the records were obtained appropriately.

"When we have obtained emails in the course of our ongoing criminal investigation, we have secured either the account owner's consent or appropriate criminal process," Peter Carr said.

But many Trump allies used the email issue as another cudgel with which to bash the probe's credibility. Members of the conservative media and some congressional Republicans have begun to systematically question Mueller's motives and credibility while the president himself called it a "disgrace" that some texts and emails from two FBI agents contained anti-Trump rhetoric. One of those agents was on Mueller's team and has been removed.

Michael Caputo, a former Trump campaign aide, called the investigation an "attack on the presidency" and told CNN there are "more and more indications that the Mueller investigation is off the rails."

The talk of firing Mueller has set off alarm bells among many Democrats, who warn it could trigger a constitutional crisis.

Some Republicans also advised against the move, including Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, who deemed the idea "a mistake."

The rumor mill overshadowed the Republican tax plan, which is set to be voted on this week. Although Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin was doing a victory lap on the tax bill on the Sunday talk show circuit, he first had to field questions on CNN's "State of the Union" about whether believed Trump would trigger the process to fire Mueller.

"I don't have any reason to think that the president is going to do that, but that's obviously up to him," said Mnuchin.

Mnuchin added, "We have got to get past this investigation. It's a giant distraction." But he declined to elaborate on how he would want it to end. Marc Short, the White House director of legislative affairs, was also peppered with questions about Mueller's fate during his own appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" and again urged a quick end to the investigation but insisted that Trump has not discussed firing Mueller.

"There's no conversation about that whatsoever in the White House," Short said.

Flames threaten coastal communities as firefighters mourn

LOS ANGELES (AP)— Thousands of firefighters tried Sunday to shield coastal communities from one of the biggest wildfires in California history while a funeral procession rolled past burn-scarred hillsides in honor of one of their colleagues who was killed battling the flames.

Crews cleared brush and dug containment lines above hillside neighborhoods in Santa Barbara County, taking advantage of slightly calmer winds a day after gusts fanned a flare-up that prompted more evacuations.

"Everything's holding really well," fire information officer Lisa Cox said. "Thousands of homes have been saved."

While gusts had eased somewhat, even lower intensity winds were still dangerous, she warned. The fire northwest of Los Angeles was 45 percent contained.

Television news footage showed at least one structure burned on property in the wealthy enclave of Montecito, and authorities said damage assessments could take days.

Mourners stood on freeway overpasses to pay respects to firefighter Cory Iverson, 32, who died Thursday of burns and smoke inhalation. His funeral procession was scheduled to wind through five Southern California counties before ending up at a funeral home in San Diego, where he was based with a state fire engine strike team. He is survived by his pregnant wife and a 2-year-old daughter.

The blaze is also blamed for the Dec. 6 death of a 70-year-old woman who died in a car crash on an evacuation route.

The fire that started nearly two weeks ago has burned more than 1,000 structures, including at least 750 homes. Some 18,000 more homes are still threatened.

Some evacuation orders were lifted to the east in Ventura County, where the blaze erupted, and officials reported making progress protecting the inland agricultural city of Fillmore.

Jim Holden returned to his neighborhood in the city of Ventura to find his home still standing amid widespread destruction. He told KABC-TV that at the height of the inferno, when it appeared his house would be lost, firefighters risked their own safety to retrieve his belongings.

"They broke in and they saved my family photos," Holden said, wiping away tears.

Mike and Dana Stoneking lost their Ventura home while many of their neighbors' properties were spared. The Stonekings planned to rebuild and found some solace after retrieving Mike's wedding ring from the ashes.

The 422-square-mile (1,093-sq. kilometer) blaze called the Thomas Fire crested a peak just north of Montecito, where evacuation orders remained in effect. Known for its star power, the enclave includes the mansions of Oprah Winfrey, Ellen DeGeneres and many other celebrities.

"Still praying for our little town," Winfrey tweeted. It was not clear if the former talk show host was in Montecito.

Burners beware: California pot sold Jan. 1 could be tainted

LOS ANGELES (AP)—That legal weed you'll be able to buy in California on New Year's Day may not be as green as it seems.

Any marijuana sold when recreational sales become legal Jan. 1 in the nation's most populous state will have been grown without regulatory controls that will eventually be in place. Pot could contain pesticides, molds and other contaminants.

"Buyer beware," cautioned Donald Land, a University of California, Davis, chemistry professor who is the chief scientific consultant at Steep Hill Labs Inc., which tests marijuana in several states.

Earlier this year, Land oversaw testing that found 93 percent of samples collected by KNBC-TV from 15 dispensaries in four Southern California counties tested positive for pesticides. That may come as a surprise for consumers who tend to trust what's on store shelves because of federal regulations by the U.S. Agriculture Department or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"Unfortunately, that's not true of cannabis," Land said. "They wrongly assume it's been tested for safety."

Stiffer regulations and testing requirements are being phased in next year, but growers and sellers have a six-month grace period to sell existing inventory grown under the loosely regulated medical marijuana program in place two decades.

With only a year to a develop a complex bureaucratic infrastructure of regulations, taxes and licensing for recreational marijuana, state officials recognized it wasn't realistic or fair to require inventory grown or manufactured under existing rules to suddenly meet testing standards.

Shops will have six months to sell the current crop of cannabis before their inventory has to pass tests. Any pot harvested or manufactured after Jan. 1, however, will be subject to testing for potency and contaminants with a high public health risk. Stricter limits will be phased in by the start of 2019.

Meanwhile, any pot that hasn't been tested will need to be labeled, said Alex Traverso, Bureau of Cannabis Control spokesman.

"That's one of the biggest reasons for regulation: to establish rules that protect public safety and improve the quality of the product," Traverso said. "When people see a sticker that says 'Not tested,' at least they know and they can choose whether they want to purchase that or not."

That means there will probably be a lot of labels required when everything from joints to cookies and oils go on sale. Land estimated that less than 5 percent of medical marijuana— the only pot legal to sell before 2018— is now tested.

As the industry emerges from the shadows, growers, manufacturers, shops and related businesses have to navigate a maze of regulations that are still taking shape across state and local jurisdictions as sales are about to begin.

Asia

Suicide bomb attack in Pakistan kills nine

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—Two suicide bombers struck a church in Pakistan on Sunday, killing nine people and wounding more than 50 others, authorities said, in the first attack on a church claimed by the country's Islamic State group affiliate.

Hundreds of worshippers were attending services ahead of Christmas when the bombers appeared in the city of Quetta and clashed with security forces. One assailant was killed at the church entrance. The other made it inside, said Sarfaraz Bugti, home minister for the southwestern Baluchistan province.

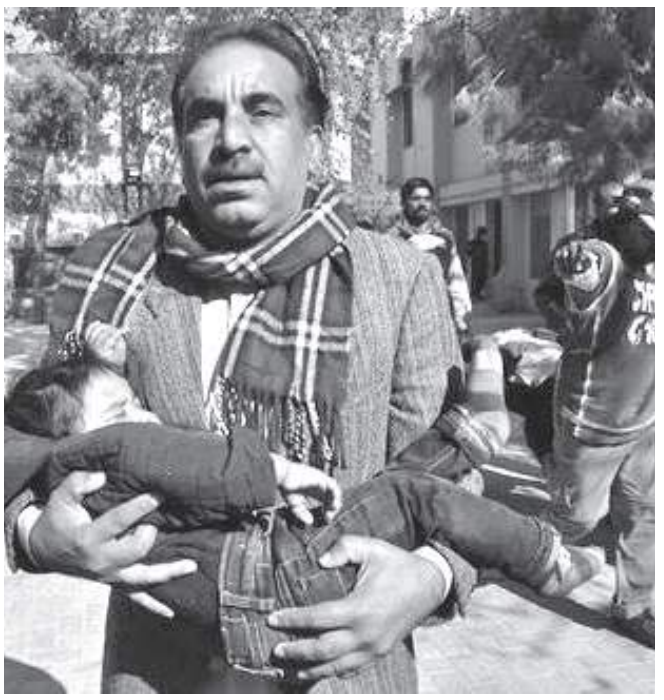
Baluchistan Police Chief Moazzam Ansari praised the response of security forces guarding the church, saying the attacker who made it inside was wounded and unable to reach the main building.

"Otherwise the loss of lives could have been much higher," he told reporters.

Quetta Police Chief Abdur Razzaq Cheema said a search was underway for two suspected accomplices who escaped.

Local television showed ambulances and security patrols racing to the scene as women and children were being led out of the church's main gate.

The Islamic State group later claimed responsibility for the attack on their Aamaq news agency, saying two "plungers" from their group had stormed the church, without providing further details.



AP

A volunteer rescues a child while others removing a body following the suicide attack on a church in Quetta, Pakistan, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017.

It was the first time the Islamic State group has claimed an attack on a church in Pakistan, though Muslim extremists have claimed church attacks in the past. The deadliest example was in September 2013, when twin suicide bomb blasts killed 85 people in a Peshawar church. In March 2015, two suicide bombers attacked two churches in the eastern city of Lahore, killing 15 people.

Fifty-seven people were wounded in the latest attack, including seven who were listed in critical condition, according to Wasim Baig, a spokesman for Quetta's main hospital.

A young girl in a white dress sobbed as she recounted the attack to Geo television, saying many people around her were wounded.

Aqil Anjum, who was shot in his right arm, told The Associated Press he heard a blast in the middle of the service, followed by heavy gunfire.

"It was chaos. Bullets were hitting people inside the closed hall," he said.

Dozens of Christians gathered outside a nearby hospital to protest the lack of security. Pakistan's president and other senior officials condemned the attack.

ASIAN BRIEFS

More than 30 dead in PH due to slow-moving storm

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A slow-moving storm has left more than 30 people dead and several others missing mostly due to landslides and floods and stranded thousands of holiday travelers in the central Philippines, officials said Sunday. Sofronio Dacillo Jr., a disaster-response officer, said 26 villagers died and 23 others were missing mostly due to landslides in different areas in the island province of Biliran, where the weather has improved after Tropical Storm Kai-Tak blew over Saturday. At least seven other people were killed in landslides and floods in four central areas due to Kai-tak, which weakened into a tropical depression but moved southwestward and picked up speed Sunday with sustained winds of 55 kilometers (34 miles) per hour, according to officials and police.

Taliban kill 11 Afghan police in attack on checkpoints

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Taliban insurgents attacked checkpoints in the southern Helmand province early Sunday, killing 11 police, an official said. Omar Zwak, the spokesman for the provincial governor, said Afghan forces eventually repelled the attack in the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah. He said the insurgents also suffered casualties, without providing figures. The Taliban, who have a strong and growing presence in Helmand, claimed the attack. The insurgents launch near-daily attacks across the country, mainly targeting security forces. In the southern Kandahar province, a suicide car bomber attacked a convoy of foreign forces, killing an Afghan woman and wounding five other civilian bystanders, said Gen. Abdul Raziq, the Kandahar police chief.

Thousands rally in Pakistan against Trump's Jerusalem move

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Thousands of Islamists have rallied in two major cities in Pakistan to condemn U.S. President Donald Trump for declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital. Supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami party in Karachi and advocates of U.S.-wanted Islamist Hafiz Saeed in Lahore dispersed peacefully after rallying Sunday for the Palestinian cause. Protests have persisted in Pakistan since Trump's announcement angered Muslims across the world. The chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, Sirajul Haq, called on all Muslim nations to suspend diplomatic ties with the U.S. until it reconsiders its Jerusalem decision. Hafiz Saeed said that Muslims the world over should put aside any differences and unite around the cause of "liberating" Jerusalem.

World

Putin thanks Trump for CIA tip he says stopped bomb plot

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin telephoned U.S. President Donald Trump Sunday to thank him for a CIA tip that helped thwart a series of bombings in St. Petersburg, the Kremlin and the White House said.

During the call, the two leaders' second in three days, Putin expressed gratitude for the CIA information. The Kremlin said it led Russia's top domestic security agency to a group of suspects that planned to bomb St. Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral and other crowded sites this weekend.

"The information received from the CIA proved sufficient to find and detain the criminal suspects," the Kremlin said.

The White House said in its readout of the conversation that "based on the information the United States provided, Russian authorities were able to capture the terrorists just prior to an attack that could have killed large numbers of people."

The White House added that Putin extended his thanks and congratulations to CIA Director Mike Pompeo and the entire agency. Trump then called Pompeo "to congratulate him, his very talented people, and the entire intelligence community on a job well done!"

"President Trump appreciated the call and told President Putin that he and the entire United States intelligence community were pleased to have helped save so many lives," the White House said in its statement. "President Trump stressed the importance of intelligence cooperation to defeat terrorists wherever they may be. Both leaders agreed that this serves as an example of the positive things that can occur when our countries work together."

The Kremlin said Putin assured Trump that "if the Russian intelligence agencies receive information about potential terror threats against the United States and its citizens, they will immediately hand it over to their U.S. counterparts via their communications channels."

The CIA's tip to Russia comes even as Russia-U.S. ties have plunged to their lowest level since the Cold War era— first over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for pro-Russia separatists in Ukraine, more recently over allegations that Moscow interfered in the U.S. presidential election to help Trump.

While Russian officials have said the two countries were continuing to exchange some terror-related intelligence, Sunday's statement from the Kremlin was Russia's first public assertion that information from the United States helped prevent an attack.

The conversation was the second between the Russian and U.S. presidents since Thursday, when Trump thanked Putin for his remarks "acknowledging America's strong economic performance," according to the White House.

During the first call, they also discussed during ways to work together to address North Korea's nuclear and ballistic weapons program, the White House said.

The Federal Security Service, or FSB, announced Friday that seven suspected followers of the Islamic State group had been arrested for allegedly planning to carry out terror attacks in St. Petersburg this weekend.

Honduras' electoral court declares president election winner

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)—President Juan Orlando Hernandez was declared the winner Sunday of Honduras' disputed election after three weeks of uncertainty and unrest in which at least 17 people died in protests amid the opposition's allegations of vote fraud.

Electoral court president David Matamoros made the announcement, saying, "We have fulfilled our obligation (and) we wish for there to be peace in our country."

According to the court's official count, Hernandez won with 42.95 percent to 41.42 for runner-up Salvador Nasralla, who well before the announcement had challenged the result and said he would not recognize it.

There were reports of nighttime demonstrations on main boulevards in Tegucigalpa, the capital, and other cities, and Nasralla's party called for more protests Monday.

There was no immediate public comment by Hernandez, whose sister Hilda Hernandez, a Cabinet minister, died Saturday in a helicopter crash.

Earlier in the day Nasralla traveled to Washington to present what he called "numerous" examples of evidence of alleged fraud. He said he planned to meet with officials from the Organization of American States, the U.S. State Department and human rights groups.

Interviewed by UneTV during a layover at the Miami airport, Nasralla called Hernandez's re-election illegitimate and said he would ask the OAS to invoke its democratic charter against Honduras.

"The declaration by the court is a mockery because it tramples the will of the people," Nasralla said. He added that he was "very optimistic" because "the people do not endorse fraud."

Former President Manuel Zelaya, a Nasralla ally, called for civil disobedience from the population and for the armed forces to recognize Nasralla.

"May God take us having made our confessions because today the people will defend in the streets the victory that it obtained at the ballot box," Zelaya said.

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro said via Twitter shortly before the announcement that election observers concluded "serious doubts persist about the results." He asked that no "irresponsible pronouncements" be made before observers could make definitive reports.

The first results reported by the electoral court before dawn the day after the Nov. 26 election showed Nasralla with a significant lead over Hernandez with nearly 60 percent of the vote counted.

Then public updates of the count mysteriously stopped for more than a day, and when they resumed, that lead steadily eroded and ultimately reversed in Hernandez's favor.

The electoral court recently conducted a recount of ballot boxes that presented irregularities and said there was virtually no change to its count. Since then it had been considering challenges filed by candidates.

Overdrive

2018 Kia Rio refines budget car space

By ROBERT DUFFER
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

There aren't many new cars in the $15,000 range anymore, largely because there aren't many subcompact budget cars being sold. Though redesigned for 2018, the Kia Rio subcompact hatch is a throwback to the days when owning a car was a rite of passage into adulthood. It didn't have to be flashy or large, it just had to be functional.

There's an understated charm in such modest simplicity. The fourth-generation Rio competently does the job of getting here and there in a smooth, efficient ride that Kia is expecting will be an IIHS Top Safety Pick. It is a good starter car for a teenager and averaging 32 mpg combined it makes for a good budget commuter. It's a car you need so you can spend money on the stuff you want.

Outwardly, changes to the body are subtle. Built on a new platform, the Rio has been slightly stretched and lowered with shorter overhangs; the grille is a tad broader, the fog lights stand out more at the edges of the fascia, and the headlights wrap around the sides to make it look more flowing. The hatch, which starts at $300 more than the sedan, could look at home in a Bourne movie European chase sequence, though not in the Mini Cooper's starring role.

The inside was roomy enough to haul three people and a weekend of tween athletic gear — as well as a Christmas tree on top — with no problem except for the nearby stink of my daughter's hockey pads. Clever storage areas for the smartphone and bottle holders in the door maximize interior space. It could be a college road trip special, but there's no reason to stuff that fifth seat with a fifth passenger, even with the extra 1.5 cubic feet of passenger room in the redesign.

Powering the front wheels is a revised 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine with a six-speed transmission. Horsepower drops from 138 to 130 but is made up for with an additional mpg, to 28 mpg city and 37 mpg highway. The six-speed lets the engine rev into the 5,000 rpm range, creating a fun wail that reminded me of budget cars of yore, except this one could take the beating. Despite the horsepower drop, it has more punch than other similar cars and is more refined. At highway speeds it's not unreasonably loud and it gives the driver an overall feeling of having gotten the best end of this deal.

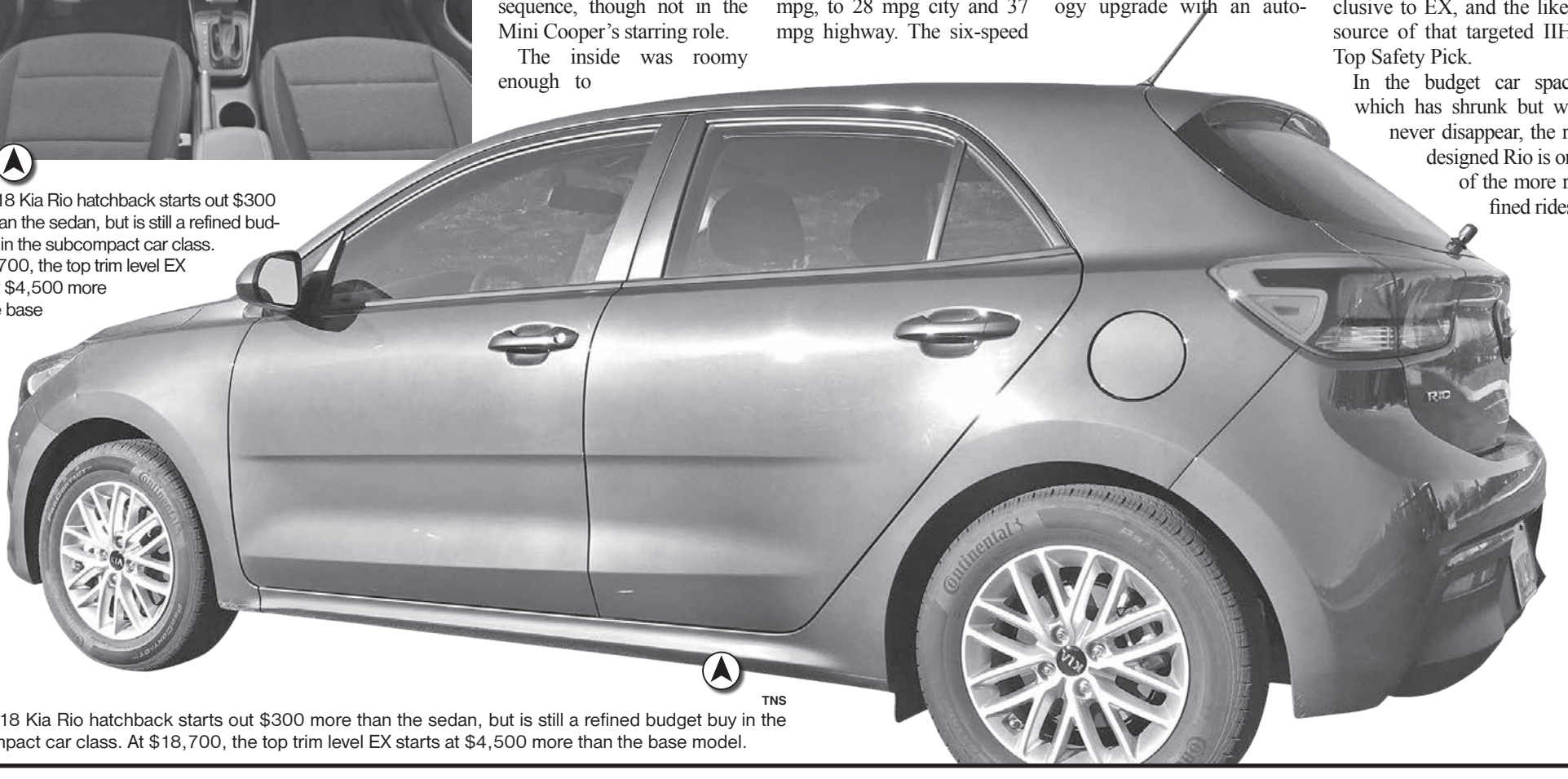
The value proposition is challenged when it comes to the top-of-the-line EX trim in the test vehicle. It's $4,500 more than the base LX hatch ($14,200), which is an upcharge of over 30 percent for what is essentially a technology upgrade with an auto- motive transmission and some nicer seats. The EX comes with a 7-inch touch screen, voice recognition system and Android Auto/Apple CarPlay. There's also autonomous emergency braking and forward collision system exclusive to EX, and the likely source of that targeted IIHS Top Safety Pick.

In the budget car space, which has shrunk but will never disappear, the redesigned Rio is one of the more refined rides.

NUTS & BOLTS

2018 Kia Rio EX hatch
- Vehicle type: subcompact hatchback
- Base price: $14,200
- As tested: $18,700 (excluding $895 delivery)
- Mpg: 28 city, 37 highway
- Engine: 1.6-liter four-cylinder
- Transmission: Six-speed automatic to front wheels

TNS
The 2018 Kia Rio hatchback starts out $300 more than the sedan, but is still a refined budget buy in the subcompact car class. At $18,700, the top trim level EX starts at $4,500 more than the base model.



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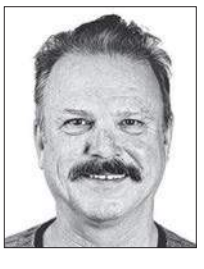
MOTORMOUTH: DIY heated seats aren't worth the hassle

By BOB WEBER
CHICAGO TRIBUNE



Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest.
Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60611 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Q: I bought a new Honda Fit this spring. It is nice and all, but I don't have heated seats like my old Golf and my car is parked on the street. Is there something I can get to solve this problem?

— C.W., Chicago

A: We have a hunch you got the Honda Fit EX model, on which heated seats are not an option. On the EX-L model, heated seats come standard. About the only option available to you is to have aftermarket heating pads installed, but your seat covers are glued to the cushions, preventing heated pads from being installed between the cushion and cover. Therefore, you may have to install the pads under a set of aftermarket seat covers. Sound like a hassle? Yeah, it is. Keep in mind that such alterations may also interfere with the seat belt sensor system.

Q: I was interested in your reader's suggestion that Off can be used to remove tree sap from a car. I discovered that rubbing alcohol or methanol works quite well for removing sap blobs. This makes sense because the alcohol (methanol, ethanol, propanol) molecules have regions that both prefer water (hydrophilic) and regions that prefer lipids (hydrophobic).

— R.H., St. Paul, Minn.

A: Good advice and less expensive than Off brand insect repellent. Although we may try methanol or propanol, we will not resort to using our good (ethanol) tequila.

Q: I recently ordered four new Bridgestone Dueler tires for my 2007 Armada from Costco. When I went to have them installed the tires had a DOT date of 2016 and I refused to accept them. Are year-and-a-half old tires acceptable? They are telling me that this is not unusual.

— S.N., Chicago

A: According to the experts at Tire Rack, which warehouses thousands of tires—some fast-moving, some not so much — "Properly stored tires that are protected from the elements and not mounted on a wheel age very slowly before they are mounted and put into service. Our experience has been that when properly stored and cared for, most street tires have a useful life in service of … six to 10 years. And while part of that time is spent as the tire travels from the manufacturing plant to the manufacturer's distribution center, to the retailer and to you, the remainder is the time it spends on your vehicle." Your tires from Costco will probably wear out before retirement.

Q: I just bought a new car and I thought I read a while back that you could put auto wax or something on the headlights to keep them from turning yellow and nasty looking. My other car was 11 years old and the headlights looked real bad. I bought two different products to clean them up and they only made them worse. Do you know what I could use to keep them looking like new?

— G.J., Streamwood, Ill.

A: If all vehicle owners would wax their headlight lenses whenever they wax their cars, the problem would go away. Yet there is the problem of owners not waxing their cars often enough, not to mention waxing their turtles.

Life & Style

'The Last Jedi' opens with $220M, 2nd best weekend all-time

NEW YORK (AP)—"Star Wars: The Last Jedi" will happily settle for second.

Rian Johnson's second installment in the third "Star Wars" trilogy rocketed to a debut of $220 million at the North American box office, according to studio estimates Sunday. That gives "The Last Jedi" the second-best opening ever, slotting in behind only its predecessor, "The Force Awakens."

The Disney blockbuster became just the fourth film to open above $200 million domestically. Aside from "The Force Awakens" ($248.8 million), the others are "The Avengers" ($207.4 million) and "Jurassic World" ($208.8 million). Accounting for inflation, the debut of 2012's "The Avengers" would roughly tie with "The Last Jedi."

"The Last Jedi" is off to a similar start overseas, too, with $230 million in international ticket sales, said Disney. That brings its three-day global haul to $450 million.

The opening also gave the Walt Disney Co. the opportunity to flex its muscles on the heels of the deal announced Thursday for it to purchase 21st Century Fox for $52.4 billion. As part of the deal, Disney will take control of 20th Century Fox, one of Hollywood's six major studios.

"The weekend that we're in is a byproduct of the foresight and vision from our CEO Bob Iger to bring Lucasfilm into the fold," said Disney distribution chief Dave Hollis, alluding to Disney's 2012 purchase of Lucasfilm. "So as we think about the possibility of other things being added, you can't help but be excited about the possibilities."

AP

Star Wars fans raise their lightsabers before the starts of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" movie in Subang Jaya, Malaysia, Friday, Dec. 15, 2017.

Fox, as it happens, was the only studio to open another new wide-release film against "The Last Jedi." Its family film, "Ferdinand," was essentially stampeded by "The Last Jedi," grossing $13.3 million. "Ferdinand" and other upcoming holiday season releases will look for more room in the coming weeks, once the "Star Wars" tsunami has waned.

While Abrams' reboot capitalized on a decade's hiatus for "Star Wars," Johnson's sequel didn't have the same benefit of freshness. It follows not only "The Force Awakens" (which ultimately grossed $2.1 billion) but last year's spinoff, "Rogue One." That release opened with $155.1 million, and grossed in total little more than $1 billion globally.

Johnson, who wrote and directed, instead aimed to distinguish "The Last Jedi" by introducing some new tones to George Lucas' space opera. "The Last Jedi" is more irreverent than previous chapters. And it has drawn plaudits for its diverse cast, including Daisy Ridley, John Boyega and newcomer Kelly Marie Tran.

"The results speak to the power of representation," said Hollis. "The film really reflects our world and beyond. It becomes something people can see themselves in, whether they see themselves in Rey or Finn or Poe or Rose or Captain Phasma. They can relate to all those characters."

Johnson's approach has seemed to work. Critics gave Johnson's film a 93 percent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences endorsed it, too, with an A CinemaScore, though not all fans are on board with Johnson's innovations. As of Sunday, "The Last Jedi" has scored a dismal 56 percent rating from some 95,000 Rotten Tomato users.

Yet the haul for "The Last Jedi" dwarfed most all releases in the two years since "The Force Awakens." By comparison, it has in three days already bested the five-week gross of Warner Bros.' "Justice League" ($219.5 million).

"Seeing a movie like this in the movie theater, getting the collective goose bumps and having the OMG-moments, that's something you cannot replicate at home on the small screen," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for comScore. "Rian Johnson has made a movie that showcases the movie theater experience in a truly brilliant way."

Signaling its faith in Johnson's course for "Star Wars," Lucasfilm earlier announced that Johnson will develop the next trilogy for the franchise, the first of which he'll write and direct. Abrams is set to return to direct Episode IX after he was brought in to replace Colin Trevorrow. A separate spinoff centered on a young Han Solo is due out next summer.

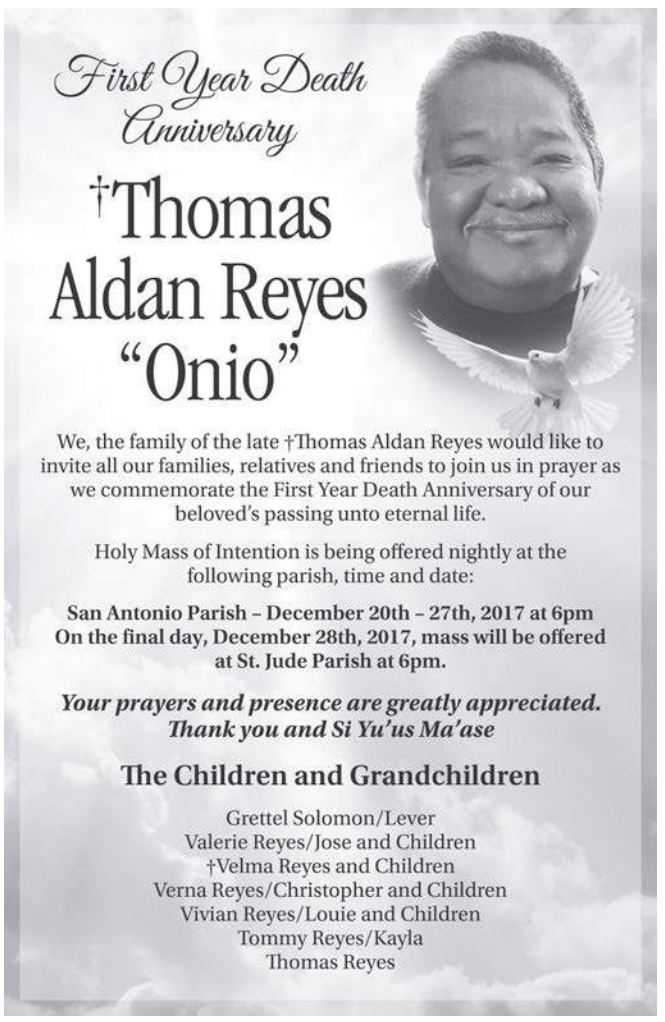
The massive debut for "The Last Jedi" singlehandedly brightens what has been a disappointing year for Hollywood. The weekend was far and away the highest grossing of the year. According to comScore, the industry was down about 3.9 percent from last year before this weekend. Now it's 2.9 percent off the 2016 pace. Dergarabedian estimates the year will end about 2 percent down with a little over $11 billion in ticket sales.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "**The Last Jedi**," $220 million ($230 million international).
2. "**Ferdinand**," $13.3 million ($6.2 million international).
3. "**Coco**," $10 million ($27.4 million international).
4. "**Wonder**," $5.4 million ($9.4 million international).
5. "**Justice League**," $4.2 million ($5.3 million international).
6. "**Daddy's Home 2**," $3.8 million ($5.8 million international).
7. "**Thor: Ragnarok**," $3 million ($1.1 million international).
8. "**The Disaster Artist**," $2.6 million.
9. "**Murder on the Orient Express**," $2.5 million ($10.8 million international).
10. "**Lady Bird**," $2.1 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "**The Last Jedi**," $230 million.
2. "**Youth**," $44 million.
3. "**The Thousand Faces of Dunjia**," $27.9 million.
4. "**Coco**," $27.4 million.
5. "**Steel Rain**," $11.6 million.
6. "**Murder on the Orient Express**," $10.8 million.
7. "**Paddington 2**," $9.7 million.
8. "**Wonder**," $9.4 million.
9. "**Ferdinand**," $6.2 million.
10. "**Daddy's Home 2**," $5.8 million.


First Year Death Anniversary
†Thomas Aldan Reyes "Onio"
We, the family of the late †Thomas Aldan Reyes would like to invite all our families, relatives and friends to join us in prayer as we commemorate the First Year Death Anniversary of our beloved's passing unto eternal life.
Holy Mass of Intention is being offered nightly at the following parish, time and date:
San Antonio Parish – December 20th – 27th, 2017 at 6pm
On the final day, December 28th, 2017, mass will be offered at St. Jude Parish at 6pm.
Your prayers and presence are greatly appreciated.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase
The Children and Grandchildren
Grettel Solomon/Lever
Valerie Reyes/Jose and Children
†Velma Reyes and Children
Verna Reyes/Christopher and Children
Vivian Reyes/Louie and Children
Tommy Reyes/Kayla
Thomas Reyes

From rapper to mogul, Jeezy continues to make power moves

ATLANTA (AP)—Rapper Jeezy was so poor growing up as a child that he and his mother sometimes knocked cockroaches off their meals so they could eat.

It's a moment Jeezy will never forget. The four-time Grammy-nominated rapper is now far removed from those poverty-stricken conditions, but those tough childhood memories still makes him hungry for a better life.

Now, he wants to use his testimony of overcoming life's daunting obstacles to inspire listeners to "trust the process" through his new album, "Pressure," out on Friday. His eighth studio album features Kendrick Lamar, Rick Ross, J. Cole and 2 Chainz.

Jeezy, 40, said "Pressure" is focusing more on his evolution from the street life.

"If you take my situation, I was a coal, a coal in a dark hole, going through everything in the world," he said. "Every type of problem you can think of. Every type of obstacle. Every type of blackball ever done. I still stood with my head up and chest out. And over time, all that pressure, it created a diamond. I came out shining. ...No matter what you're going through in life, just stand your ground and believe in yourself."

AP

Rapper Jeezy is photographed at his recording studio in Atlanta, Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017. Jeezy is using his testimony of overcoming life's daunting obstacles to inspire listeners to "trust the process" through his new album, "Pressure, which releases Friday.

From rapper to mogul, Jeezy continues to make power moves. He has an online merchandise shop called 99 Agency, opened a steakhouse restaurant in Atlanta, partnered with the Atlanta Hawks for his own apparel, became an adviser for Avion Tequila and built a six-story compound studio in the city. He also has his record label called Corporate Thugz Entertainment.

Not bad for Jeezy, who used to struggle to pay his own water bill. The rapper said at this point in his life he's the most happiest and healthiest.

"You have to know this is possible," he said. "When you see me, I'm living proof that you can do these things. If you look at where I came from, what I've been through or the obstacles that I've dodged to where I am now, it should give you hope. I came a long way."

Known for his trademark ad-libs from "Yeeaaah" and "That's riiiigght," Jeezy emerged in the mid-2000s with his raw firsthand experiences of his crack-entrepreneur tales and violent street life. But he's also dealt with critics who felt he glorified street life, including gun violence and drugs.

But Jeezy said he's always tried to speak the language of those living in impoverished neighborhoods that relate to him. He said there's a motivational message within his music, which he calls "ghetto gospel."

Music Review: Eminem sounds alive on 'Revival'

By MESFIN FEKADU
AP MUSIC WRITER

The A-List collaborators on Eminem's new album scream "I want a radio hit," with Beyonce, Ed Sheeran, Pink and Alicia Keys co-starring on the songs.

It wouldn't be hard to believe, especially since Eminem's last major hits have relied heavily on Rihanna, from "Love the Way You Lie" to "The Monster." But thankfully on "Revival," Eminem returns as the star of his show.

Beyonce sounds beautiful on opener "Walk On Water," but Em's words are even better, as he delivers honest lyrics that sound, and feel, true to him.

"Every album song I was spazzin' the (eff) out on/And now I'm gettin' clowned and frowned on," he raps.

AP

In this July 20, 2015, file photo, Rapper Eminem attends the premiere of "Southpaw" in New York.

Eminem is no longer hip-hop's most prized wordsmith and the adjustment is tough for any performer once known as one of music's most celebrated acts.

But on "Revival," his ninth studio album, Eminem makes himself relevant with his smart rhymes, which is refreshing in the age of "mumble rap." The album artwork is of the American flag, with race and President Donald Trump recurring topics throughout the 19 tracks.

"So, hands in the air, let's hear it for the start of a brand new America without him, and be proud of where we're from," Eminem raps on "Like Home," featuring a stellar-sounding Keys.

"Just keep marchin', till we reach Congress/But they're gonna say you're tryin' to take an irrational stance/If you try to slander the flag/But somebody has to be the sacrificial lamb/So they call it a Kaepernick tantrum/If you don't stand for the national anthem," he raps on the six-minute "Untouchable."

Eminem co-produced some of the songs, also getting help from Rick Rubin, Dr. Dre, Alex Da Kid, Mr. Porter and Skylar Grey, the singer, songwriter and originator of "Love the Way You Lie."

Overall, "Revival" is solid. It isn't his best album, but it does showcase some of his growth.

"All in all, it's said and done/And at the end of my run I just rewind clocks, forever young/Make time stop, will I ever fall off? That day will never come," he raps on "Nowhere Fast," later adding: "I'm better than I ever was."

He knows that self-confidence is more important than critics.

Jazz and pop singer Keely Smith dies of heart failure at 89

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP)—Keely Smith, a pop and jazz singer known for her solo recordings of jazz standards as well as her musical partnership with Louis Prima, has died of apparent heart failure in Palm Springs. She was 89.

According to a news release from her publicist Bob Merlis, Smith was under a physician's care when she died Saturday.

Smith was born Dorothy Jacqueline Keely in Norfolk, Virginia on March 9, 1928, and got her first paying job singing with the Earl Bennett band when she was just 15. She later auditioned to sing with Louis Prima's band, and began touring with them in 1948. She and Prima married in 1953, and together they won a Grammy for their hit, "That Old Black Magic" in 1959.

In 2001— 42 years later— Smith was nominated for a Grammy for her album "Keely Sings Sinatra."

In a news release her publicist said Smith was focused on being in control of her own career, setting up her own record label "Keely Records" in conjunction with friend Frank Sinatra's Reprise Records. She divorced Prima in 1961 and married Jimmy Bowen in 1965. Her third marriage was to Bobby Milano in the 1970s.

During her seven-decade career Smith was lauded by critics for her bold voice and ability to make the music swing, and she received several awards including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. For the 50th Grammy Awards in 2008, she performed "That Old Black Magic" as a duet with Kid Rock.

Smith has lived in Palm Springs for about 40 years. She is survived by her two children, Toni Prima and Luanne Prima.

AP

In this Feb. 10, 2008 file photo, Keely Smith presents an award at the 50th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

'A Prairie Home Companion' name becomes 'Live from Here'

NEW YORK (AP)—"A Prairie Home Companion" has been given a new name—"Live from Here"— in the wake of creator Garrison Keillor's acrimonious split with Minnesota Public Radio.

Chris Thile, the mandolin virtuoso who has hosted the weekly variety show since Keillor's retirement last year, announced the new name Saturday evening as the show opened a live performance in New York City.

MPR terminated its contracts with Keillor after it said it had received multiple allegations of improper conduct by Keillor. MPR has declined to give any details except to say the allegations involved treatment of one woman who had worked with Keillor when he was still with the show.

Keillor has said he accidentally touched a woman's bare back while trying to console her.

AP

In this July 20, 2015, file photo, Garrison Keillor, creator and host of "A Prairie Home Companion," appears during an interview in St. Paul, Minn. "

Karaoke fans have more love for singing than talent

DEAR ABBY: My wife, "Karen," loves to sing karaoke along with many others, most of whom are vocally challenged. Listening to some of them can be grueling when we go out. Karen knows many of these "performers," and when they finish, she goes and tells them what a great job they've done. When I asked her why she gives the false compliments, she said, "I don't want to hurt their feelings."

Well, the same goes for Karen. The other singers compliment her to the point that she now believes she has a competition-worthy voice. In reality, while her voice isn't terrible, it's nowhere near what she thinks it is.

My wife is the love of my life and the nicest person I've ever known. I'm concerned for the future if someone should ever be honest with her about this because, so far, no one has been. Should I tell her the truth to save her from potential public embarrassment, or should I keep my mouth shut?

COVERING MY EARS

DEAR COVERING: Unless your wife decides to audition for "American Idol," the chances of her being booed off stage are slim. You don't have to sing her praises, but I see nothing positive to be gained by diminishing her pleasure in performing. The word from here is: Keep your lip zipped.

DEAR ABBY: I have a wonderful, kind sister-in-law I'll call "Margaret." Our sons were born in the same year. She has chosen to keep her son home, while I am sending mine to day care. Both boys are toddlers now. The problem is, my son is socialized, while hers is not.

Margaret's son is mean and unwilling to share or play with my child. He lacks empathy and seeks only adult attention. Because of his lack of socialization and outright unsafe behavior, I don't want my son around him. Am I wrong for not wanting him to be exposed to this behavior?

My husband says it's good for our little one to learn how to deal with mean behavior, since it will make him "tough." However, I don't feel it's our child's job to learn to be tough at such a young age.

DAY CARE ACCEPTING MOMMY

DEAR DAY CARE MOMMY: Perhaps your son should see this cousin only when they will be closely supervised. Your child may learn to "toughen up" later, but at the age of 2 or 3, it's a bit premature. The child who may be in for trouble is his cousin, because learning concepts like sharing and empathy enable children to successfully socialize with others throughout their lives.

DEAR ABBY: I know for a fact that gifts I have given to family members are often immediately given away. Should I confront them about this? I'd like to suggest that instead of giving the gift away they please return it to me. Of course, I know I could just quit giving them gifts. But I'd like for them to know the reason, instead of appearing to be stingy. Anxious for your opinion.

ANXIOUS IN FORT WORTH

DEAR ANXIOUS: This is a delicate situation, but it can be handled if you're careful not to cause embarrassment when you tell your relatives you know what they've been doing with your gifts. Perhaps, rather than say you will just quit giving them gifts, you should offer to give them gift cards for a store they like. That way they can have something they will enjoy.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)h

DEAR ABBY

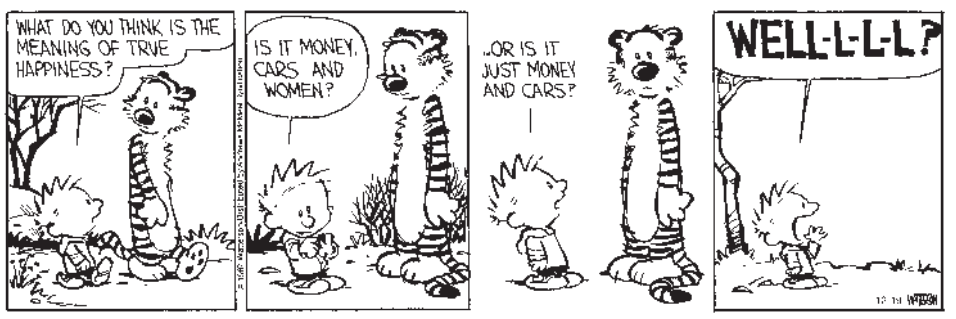
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I WONDER WHAT ODIE WOULD LIKE FOR CHRISTMAS
HE WASN'T SURE
SO I TOLD HIM HE MIGHT FIND SOME IDEAS ONLINE
STINKY, SMELLY THINGS

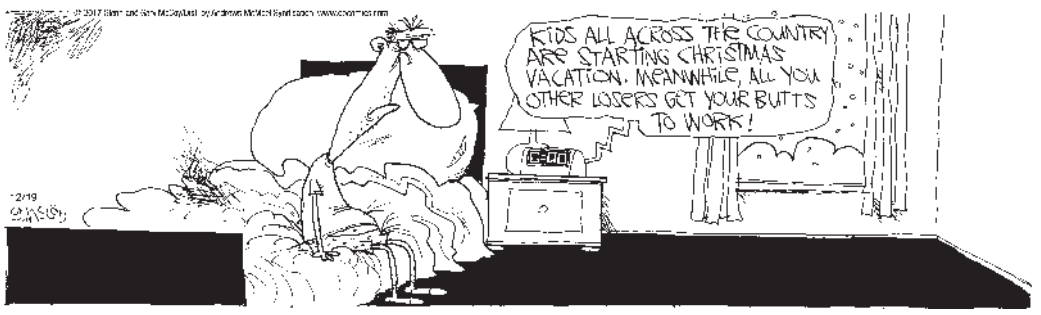
Adam@Home

By Bryan Basset

YOU'RE STILL WRITING?
I AM.
HONEY, IT'S 4 A.M. YOU NEED SLEEP.
I'M FINISHING CHAPTER TWENTY SEBEN DEN ALL BEEZUP INTA FLARNLE TUB.
TAP TYPE
HONEY.
OKAY. I KNOW THAT SEEMED BAD, BUT IT WAS ONLY MY MOUTH THAT FELL ASLEEP.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

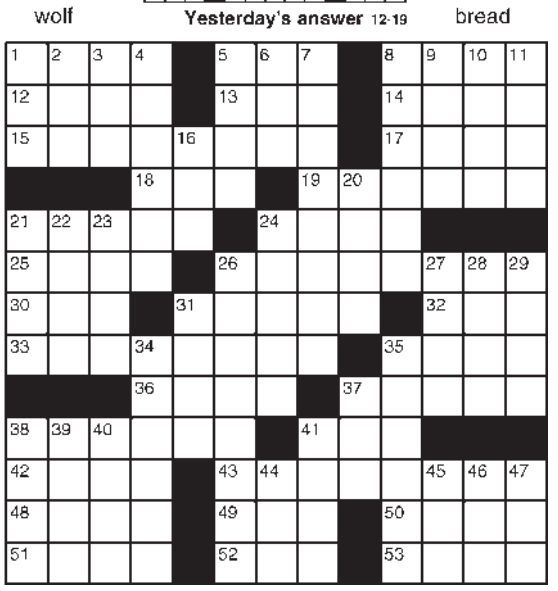
ACROSS
1 Weaponry
5 24 hours
8 Infamous tsar
12 Scarce
13 — Jima
14 Bistro handout
15 Coop group
17 Bog fuel
18 Decay
19 Blows one's top
21 Loafers, e.g.
24 Urban haze
25 Fourth-down play
26 Passageways for Santa
30 Jargon suffix
31 "The Nutcracker —"
32 Caviar base
33 Smoke-dried pepper
35 Pepsi rival
36 Timber wolf
37 Ruminates
38 Ring around the sun
41 Nap site
42 From the start
43 Tots
48 Teen's woe
49 Tease
50 Chorus syllables
51 Must have
52 Compass dir.
53 Thames town

DOWN
1 Joan of —
2 Fan's cry
3 Hosp. scan
4 Under wraps
5 Food regimen
6 Bristle
7 California national park
8 Cast doubt upon
9 Second in command
10 Body sci.
11 Crazy
16 Decks in the ring
20 Apple variety
21 Detail, briefly
22 "Be quiet!"
23 "Dedicated to the — Love"
24 1970 Neil Diamond hit
26 Reductions
27 Cupid's alias
28 Oxen's burden
29 Beholds
31 Any time now
34 Cleared of snow
35 Get cozy (with)
37 Actor Gibson
38 "Misery" star James
39 Formerly
40 Painter Magritte
41 Wait
44 That guy's
45 Squealer
46 "Xanadu" band
47 Indian bread

Solution time: 22 mins.

P	A	Y		E	F	L	A	T		B	O	B
O	N	E		S	L	I	M	E		A	P	O
P	I	N	E	C	O	N	E	S		R	E	O
			A	R	T		S	T	N	I	C	K
A	S	T	R	O	S		S	E	A	T		
J	A	R		W	A	N		E	L	O	P	E
A	R	O	D		M	I	A		A	N	A	G
M	I	M	I	C		A	L	B		C	V	A
		B	E	A	U		C	L	O	S	E	D
A	M	O	U	N	T		I	A	N			
C	A	N		T	I	M	E	Z	O	N	E	S
H	J	E		C	O	M	E		O	P	T	
Y	D	S		S	A	I	Y	H		G	A	Y

Yesterday's answer 12-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marla Sokoloff, 37; Jake Gyllenhaal, 37; Alyssa Milano, 45; Tyson Beckford, 47.

Happy Birthday: Taking a serious look at life, what you have accomplished and what you still want to achieve will encourage you to take an innovative and enthusiastic approach to reaching your goals. Satisfaction and peace of mind will become as important to you as the rewards you get for the effort you put in. Romance is highlighted. Your numbers are 6, 10, 22, 29, 34, 44, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Channel your energy into helping others and ensuring that you use your skills, knowledge and experience wisely. Take your time and learn as you move forward. Discipline and personal growth will result in better days ahead. Travel and self-awareness are featured. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Open up a heartfelt conversation with someone you love. Explain your thoughts and share your ideas. Communication will open the doors to unity and a better understanding of how you can make your life better. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Let your conscience be your guide. Do the right thing and you will be praised for both your courage and resilience. Make noteworthy comments and bring about personal changes that will boost your reputation. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Make relationships a priority. Do whatever it takes to please someone you love. Social events, shopping sprees or activities involving young family members will bring you joy. Use your imagination and you'll come up with a great idea. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let the last-minute changes others make interfere with your plans. Follow through and don't hesitate to take advantage of any opening that you can turn into an opportunity. Personal changes will enhance your enthusiasm about reaching your personal goals. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Getting out of the house or visiting people who will add to your enthusiasm and lift your spirits should be your choice. Engaging in social events with old friends or doing something with children in the family will brighten your day. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't let what someone else is doing affect your mood. If you can't help, opt to get out of the way. The time spent away from home or with friends will be informative and help you make decisions regarding your personal life. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Making plans with friends and relatives will give you something to look forward to. A short trip will ensure that you get everything done on time. Be realistic when it comes to your spending habits. Offer someone you love a unique gift. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Look for a new way to use old tools, skills and methods. An industrious attitude will help position you for the future. Working alongside your peers, family and friends will bring rewards. Personal changes will bring good results. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Emotions will be close to the surface. Share your thoughts, but don't put yourself in a compromising position. Someone will twist your words if you are not precise and to the point. Listen carefully and don't divulge personal information. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Be secretive about your whereabouts as well as your thoughts and feelings. You have to be positive about what you want and the plans you are going to put into play before you reach out and share with others. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Take care of any financial, legal or contractual updates that have to be done before the year comes to a close. It's important not to let what others do fluster you. Stick to your plan and you will come out on top. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are industrious, original and proactive. You are intense and worldly.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2		4			1	5
6		4					2
	9	7	3				
9		8	6				
				3			
					8	4		1
					5	8	9	
1						7		6
7	4				6		5	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	6	8	5	1	4	2	9	3
9	4	3	6	8	2	7	5	1
2	1	5	3	9	7	6	4	8
5	3	6	4	7	9	8	1	2
8	2	4	1	3	5	9	7	6
1	9	7	2	6	8	4	3	5
4	7	1	8	5	6	3	2	9
3	8	2	9	4	1	5	6	7
6	5	9	7	2	3	1	8	4

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ON ANY COLLEGE CAMPUS Solution: 8 letters

M	P	L	I	B	R	A	R	Y	B	D	U	I	N	N
A	D	A	B	U	S	B	S	P	I	H	C	S	O	A
S	O	P	R	E	L	B	I	P	D	L	M	I	I	P
C	R	T	T	T	G	O	L	K	U	R	T	S	T	P
O	M	O	V	E	Y	O	I	B	E	A	C	L	A	I
T	N	P	J	L	M	K	S	T	N	H	O	A	C	N
N	O	E	D	A	U	Q	H	I	O	O	M	N	U	G
I	I	N	S	B	M	G	T	U	H	P	P	I	D	N
O	T	C	S	S	I	S	S	C	P	O	U	F	E	I
P	A	I	A	N	A	E	S	N	L	S	T	O	S	K
R	U	L	L	R	A	L	L	Y	L	T	E	O	D	L
E	D	L	C	O	F	F	E	E	E	E	R	D	R	A
W	A	O	F	F	I	C	E	G	C	R	E	T	A	W
O	R	A	B	S	U	P	M	A	C	S	N	A	C	K
P	G	N	I	M	O	C	E	M	O	H	A	L	L	S

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All-nighter, Bike, Book, Bus, Campus Bar, Cards, Cellphone, Chips, Class, Clubs, Coffee, Computer, Diploma, Dorm, Education, Finals, Food, Graduation, Gym, Halls, Homecoming, House, Labs, Laptop, Library, Major, Mascot, Move, Napping, Notes, Office, Party, Pencil, Posters, Powerpoint, Procrastination, Quad, Rally, School, Snack, Terms, Walking, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Be Yourself

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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Find today's solution in classified section

Pats rally past Steelers for AFC East title

AP

New England Patriots running back Dion Lewis (33) is tackled by Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Sean Spence (51) during the first half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017.

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The New England Patriots have built a dynasty on second chances. Miss an opportunity to bury the Super Bowl champions and they will find a way to find a way, usually behind a mix of Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski, and defensive playmaking at just the right time.

It's a lesson the Pittsburgh Steelers have learned through the years, one they were determined to finally learn from this time around. Instead, more of the same.

Ben Roethlisberger was intercepted in the end zone with 5 seconds remaining, securing New England's 27-24 comeback victory Sunday built on more Brady and Gronkowski magic.

Another AFC East title, a record ninth in a row.

Another shot at home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

This one came with an assist from the NFL rule book that will add "surviving the ground" to the league's ever-expanding and ever-perplexing lexicon.

Plus, the risky decision by the Steelers quarterback not to spike the ball and set up a tying field goal, which could reverberate well into January.

"It was a tight game," said Brady, who fed Gronkowski repeatedly to set up Dion Lewis' go-ahead 8-yard touchdown with 56 seconds remaining. "We just made one more play than they did."

Same as it ever was.

The Patriots (11-3) can make sure they don't have to leave Foxborough in January if they finish up the regular season with wins over Buffalo and the New York Jets. Brady finished with 298 yards passing with two touchdowns and an interception. Gronkowski, fresh off a one-game suspension, finished with nine receptions for 168 yards, including three on the winning drive.

Jaguars 45, Texans 7

In Jacksonville, the Jaguars are returning to the playoffs for the first time in a decade thanks to a 45-7 drubbing of rival Houston on Sunday.

Once the NFL's poster child for futility and a punchline for potential relocation, the Jaguars (10-4) are now one of the league's top turnaround stories.

Blake Bortles threw three touchdowns passes, including two to a reserve receiver who slept in his car earlier this season.

Vikings 34, Bengals 7

In Minneapolis, Eric Kendricks had an interception return for a touchdown, Case Keenum passed for 236 yards and two scores, and the Vikings clinched the NFC North over the depleted and disinterested Bengals.

Running backs Latavius Murray and Jerick McKinnon combined for 37 touches and 242 yards from scrimmage for the Vikings (11-3), who were given quite the reprieve on the schedule a week after their eight-game winning streak ended at Carolina in the last of three consecutive road trips.

Eagles 34, Giants 29

In East Rutherford, Nick Foles threw four touchdown passes in his first start replacing the injured Carson Wentz, and the Eagles secured a first-round playoff bye.

Foles hit 24 of 38 passes for 237 yards and no interceptions. The NFC East champion Eagles (12-2) made a late stand on first-and-goal in the final minute in edging the Giants (2-12) for the second time this season, spoiling a three-touchdown, season-high 434-yard passing game by Eli Manning.

Foles hit Alshon Jeffery, Zach Ertz, Trey Burton and Nelson Agholor on scoring passes ranging from 3 to 13 yards in filling in for Wentz, who tore an ACL last week and was lost for the season after a brilliant year.

Panthers 31, Packers 24

In Charlotte, Cam Newton threw for 242 yards and four touchdowns, and the Panthers spoiled Aaron Rodgers' return from a broken collarbone.

Damiere Byrd had two touchdown catches, and Christian McCaffrey had 136 yards from scrimmage, including a 7-yard touchdown reception as the Panthers (10-4) won their fourth straight home game.

Greg Olsen had his most productive game since returning from a broken foot, catching nine passes for 116 yards and a TD, and the Panthers kept pace with the first-place New Orleans Saints in the NFC South.

Saints 31, Jets 19

In New Orleans, Mark Ingram ran for two touchdowns and gained 151 yards from scrimmage, including a late 50-yard TD run, and the Saints overcame three turnovers.

Michael Thomas became the second NFL player with at least 90 receptions in his first two seasons. He caught nine passes for 93 yards, including a pivotal fourth-quarter touchdown on a short slant for New Orleans (10-4), which retained its tenuous hold on first place in the NFC South heading into the final two weeks of the regular season.

Alvin Kamara turned a short catch into a 10-yard TD in his return from a concussion that knocked him out of the Saints' loss at Atlanta a week earlier.

Ravens 27, Browns 10

In Cleveland, Joe Flacco threw a touchdown pass, ran for a score and beat Cleveland again as the Ravens stayed on track for the AFC playoffs.

With victories at home over Indianapolis and Cincinnati in its last two games, the Ravens will return to the postseason after a two-year absence.

The Browns are two losses from becoming the NFL's second 0-16 team.

Flacco scored on a 2-yard run and threw a 33-yard TD pass to Benjamin Watson as the Ravens (8-6) took control with two touchdowns in the final 3:01 of the first half.

Defensive tackle Brandon Williams recovered a fumble and rolled in for a TD in third quarter to put the Ravens up 24-10.

Bills 24, Dolphins 16

In Orchard Park, LeSean McCoy scored twice and surpassed 10,000 career yards rushing, while helping the Bills stay in the thick of the AFC playoff hunt.

Tyrod Taylor also scored on a 9-yard touchdown run and Shareece Wright and Jordan Poyer intercepted Miami's Jay Cutler on consecutive drives to start the second half. Buffalo never trailed. Rookie Tre'Davious White sealed the win by intercepting Cutler with 28 seconds remaining—and one play after Miami punter Matt Haack recovered an onside kick at Miami's 37.

The Bills have won three of four and improved to 8-6 to match the team's best record through 14 games during Buffalo's 17-year playoff drought—the longest active streak in North America's four major professional sports. The Bills were 8-6 in both 2004 and 2014, but missed the playoffs with 9-7 finishes.

Redskins 20, Cardinals 15

In Landover, Anthony Lanier sacked Blaine Gabbert and forced a fumble that Preston Smith recovered and the Redskins held on to beat the Cardinals in a comedy of errors for each team.

Smith also intercepted Gabbert and Lanier batted down three passes and had two sacks as they gave the Redskins (6-8) a glimpse of their potential as significant pieces of the defense for years to come.

Gabbert was 16 of 41 for 189 yards with the interception and a fumble he recovered himself in the fourth quarter.

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Facing misconduct probe, Panthers owner selling team

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Facing a growing investigation that accuses him of sexual misconduct and using racist language at work, Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson announced Sunday that he will sell the NFL team after the season.

The team announced on Twitter that Richardson is selling the team, linking to a five-paragraph letter by the franchise's only owner.

"I believe it is time to turn the franchise over to new ownership," Richardson wrote, saying he wouldn't begin discussions until after the season. The Panthers, who lost in the Super Bowl two seasons ago, are in playoff position again.

"I hope everyone in the organization, both on and off the field, will be firmly focused on one mission: to play and win the Super Bowl," said Richardson, 81.

Richardson's letter did not directly address the investigation or allegations against him.

The NFL awarded Richardson, a former player with the Baltimore Colts, an expansion franchise in 1993, and he has been the team's only owner.

"There has been no greater mission or purpose in my life than to have brought and NFL franchise to Charlotte," Richardson wrote. "The obstacles back then were significant and some even questioned whether or community could or would support professional football. But I always knew that if given the chance the Carolina would rise to the occasion. And you have."

Richardson attended Sunday's win over the Green Bay Packers at Bank of America Stadium and was photographed sitting beside his wife Rosalind in his luxury box.

He did not speak to reporters.

The NFL had no comment on the upcoming sale of the Panthers.

"While I will no longer be the team owner, I will always be the Panthers Number One fan," Richardson's letter said.

The Panthers are tied to Charlotte through June of 2019.

The city of Charlotte and the Panthers reached agreement on improvements for the team's stadium in 2013. The plan called for the city to contribute about $87 million for renovations to Bank of America Stadium in exchange for a six-year hard tether to keep the Panthers in Charlotte.

The money is less than what the team was seeking for improvements of the stadium, which opened in 1996. Forbes estimates the Panthers worth at $2.3 billion.

LeBron's triple-double lifts Cavs over Wizards

WASHINGTON (AP)—LeBron James joked that he changed out of his shoes -- one black, one white, with "equality" in gold capital letters—at halftime because he was playing poorly.

"If that's a bad game," teammate Kevin Love said, "then sheesh!"

James finished with 20 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers past the Washington Wizards 106-99 on Sunday night for their 18th victory in 19 games, and then said afterward his choice of footwear was related to the game being played about a mile from President Donald Trump's White House.

"This is a beautiful country and we're never going to let one person dictate how beautiful and how powerful we are," the four-time NBA MVP said.

James had his fourth triple-double in the past five games despite being called for four fouls in the final quarter.

Still, he offered a scathing self-critique.

"I actually played pretty bad tonight. I wasn't as strong with the ball: I had six turnovers. Kind of lazy with the ball, at times," James said. "And my teammates did a great job bailing me out."

Love led Cleveland with 25 points and added nine rebounds. Jeff Green added 15 points, and Kyle Korver scored 11.

"He just affects the game in so many ways and makes a lot of plays for other guys, too," Love said about James. "He's just setting us up and getting us into our spots. That's what he does. He's our leader."

The last time these teams played, at Washington on Nov. 3, Cleveland won thanks to 57 points from James.

That prompted Wizards coach Scott Brooks to joke before tipoff Sunday that holding the four-time league MVP to "56 would be pretty good tonight." He also cracked, "I have a lot of respect for Coach (Tyronn) Lue, but I think he's making a bad decision if he doesn't sit LeBron tonight. Back-to-back games, right? Our fans saw 57. They don't need to see any more."

This time, James was more of a facilitator.

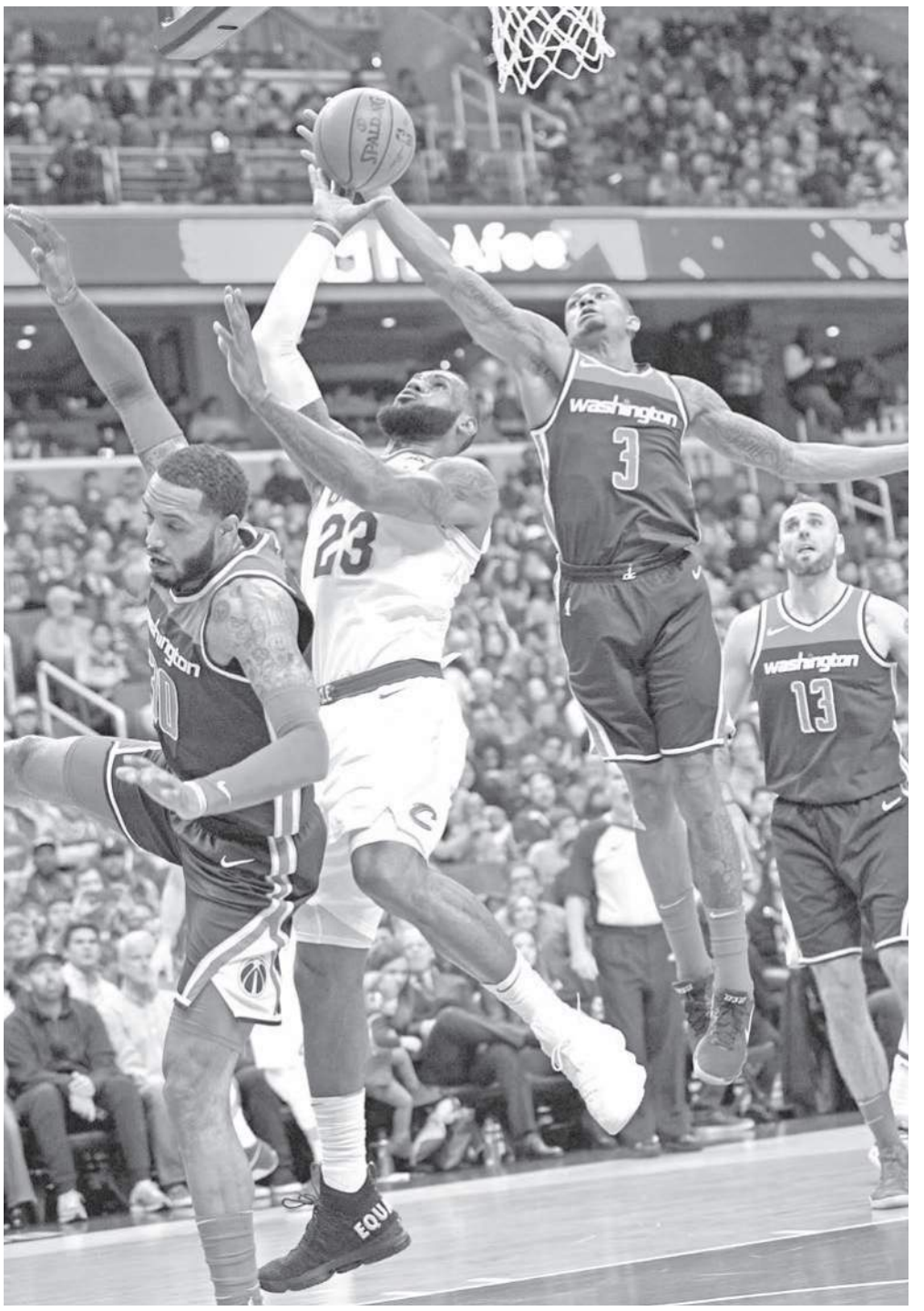
"His IQ is the highest I've ever been around," Brooks said afterward. "Just the way he sees the floor."

Bradley Beal led Washington with 27 points, and John Wall had 15 points, 10 rebounds and six assists in 32 minutes in his third game back after missing nine with an injured left knee.

In a matchup of Eastern Conference division leaders, neither team led by more than seven until Wall turned the ball over, leading to a fast break for James, who was fouled at the other end and completed the three-point play for a 103-94 lead.

That was part of a 23-16 edge for the Cavs in the fourth quarter, which began with the teams tied at 83.

"Against a great team like that, you have to be sharp the whole game," Wizards forward Mike Scott said. "In the fourth, we weren't sharp on the offensive end, and they made plays."



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (23) goes to the basket against Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal (3), forward Mike Scott, left, and Washington Wizards center Marcin Gortat (13) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017, in Washington.

Pacers 109, Nets 97

In New York, Indiana Pacers coach Nate McMillan came into the season trying to figure out just what kind of contribution he would get from Victor Oladipo after he arrived in a trade for one the NBA's best two-way players in Paul George.

The second overall pick in the 2013 draft has met McMillan's expectations after spending the previous two seasons in Orlando and Oklahoma City.

Oladipo scored 26 points, reserve Domantas Sabonis had 17 and the Pacers beat the Brooklyn Nets.

"He's a guy we're trying to develop into a franchise player. He's come in with a lot of confidence," McMillan said. "This year is really about developing our young guys and seeing what these guys are capable of doing. He's doing some good things."

Myles Turner added 16 points, Cory Joseph chipped in 15 and Darren Collison scored 14 for the Pacers.

The Nets' Allen Crabbe shook off his recent struggles, scoring 17 points in the first half on 5-for-7 shooting, including four 3s. He took only one shot and didn't score in the second half.

"I don't think they did anything differently defensively. I don't know," Crabbe said of his quiet second half.

Trailing by one at the end of the opening quarter, the Pacers got a jolt from Oladipo, the team's leading scorer at 24.5 points per game.

After Crabbe's 3-pointer cut the lead to 51-45 with 2:25 left in the first half, Oladipo reeled off eight straight points for a 59-48 advantage at the end of the second period.

When Brooklyn drew within five points in the beginning of the fourth quarter, Indiana's summer acquisition capped a 10-3 run with five consecutive points, landing an alley-oop dunk that drew the attention of the Barclays Center crowd.

Pistons 114, Magic 110

In Detroit, the Pistons tied a franchise record for 3-pointers and they needed almost all of them to avoid a bad home loss.

Reggie Bullock scored a career-high 20 points, and the Pistons made 17 shots from beyond the arc in a 114-110 victory over the Orlando Magic on Sunday. Detroit nearly gave away a 24-point lead in the fourth quarter, and coach Stan Van Gundy wasn't happy at all with his team's effort.

"We played a very good first half, Reggie Bullock and Anthony Tolliver played very well, and we didn't try at all in the second half," Van Gundy said. "We didn't bring anything to the second half."

The Pistons have won three in a row after starting December with a seven-game losing streak.

Nikola Vucevic had 24 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for the Magic. They have dropped five straight and 16 of 19.

Detroit started fast, making six of its first seven shots to take a 15-5 lead. At the end of the first quarter, Ish Smith made a shot, and then Langston Galloway added a steal and a floater when the Magic botched the inbound play. It was 36-23 after one.

The Pistons led 60-43 at halftime after going 10 of 18 from beyond the arc in the first half. Then Detroit added six more 3-pointers and 36 points in the third quarter.

Tolliver's 3-pointer tied the franchise record and gave the Pistons a 105-81 lead with 7:00 remaining. Then Orlando scored the game's next 19 points.

"I don't really feel like our defensive intensity was very good the whole game," Tolliver said. "Even though we were shooting really well, I think we definitely relaxed way too much."

Raptors 108, Kings 93

In Toronto, after a high-scoring first half, the Sacramento Kings suddenly found themselves struggling to put points on the board against the Raptors.

DeMar DeRozan scored 21 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 13 points and a season-high 16 rebounds and Toronto held Sacramento to 30 second-half points Sunday, beating the Kings.

Kyle Lowry added 16 points and Norman Powell had 14 for the Raptors, who won their ninth straight home game. Toronto is an NBA-best 11-1 at home.

DeRozan gave the Raptors a 61-60 lead with a pull-up jump shot with less than two seconds remaining in the second quarter, but George Hill banked in a 46-foot 3-pointer from midcourt at the buzzer, giving Sacramento a 63-61 edge at the intermission. The Kings shot 61.9 percent in the first half, making 26 of 42 field goal attempts.

Sacramento scored 14 points in the third quarter, making five of 18 shots, then followed up with 16 points in the fourth.

"I thought we played a little bit slower in the second half," Kings coach Dave Joerger said. "I think both teams were in there saying `Man, we can't give up 60 points by halftime.' Maybe we got a little slow. I credit their defense."

Celtics' Hayward open to returning this season

BOSTON (AP)—Celtics guard Gordon Hayward is open to playing this season, but said it will depend on how fast he is able to heal and show progress as he works his way back from a broken left ankle.

Hayward was at TD Garden for Boston's matchup with the Utah Jazz, the team he left this past summer in free agency after seven seasons to sign a four-year, $128 million contract with the Celtics. He was injured in Boston's season opener at Cleveland.

"My mind is open to that," Hayward said of the possibility of returning to game action before season's end. "I'm trying to get back as fast as I can. It all depends on how I heal, and taking it day-by-day, goal by goal. We'll see what happens."

Wednesday marked a milestone in Hayward's recovery process, when he was able to shed the walking boot he's been using since his surgery in October. He will continue to wear a protective brace during the rehab process.

He said he doesn't know how long he will have to wear the brace. But he said he is now allowed to do more shooting and begin working more on mobility.

"I don't know that timetable to be honest," he said of how long he'll be in the brace. "I'm focused on each day, each week. I know I just got in this, so it's probably a little while. Probably a little while longer."

Hayward said the plan was always to begin attending games regularly once he got out of the walking boot and into the brace. It just happened to coincide with Friday's matchup with Utah.

He had dinner with former Jazz teammate Joe Ingles on Thursday and planned to check in with his former teammates and coaches before they left Boston.

Jazz coach Quin Snyder said there are no sour feelings about Hayward's decision to leave in free agency.

Smooth on the field, Jeter struggles in front office

MIAMI (AP)—Derek Jeter, The Player, glided through two decades in the Big Apple. His charisma made it all look so effortless, a beloved figure who could seemingly do no wrong, even in the media cauldron that is New York City.

Which makes Derek Jeter, The Baseball Executive, all the more baffling.

How has a guy who rarely took a wrong step during his long career as the Yankees shortstop and captain managed to become Public Enemy No. 1 in South Florida in just a few short months?

Now, this isn't one of those piling-on diatribes against Jeter for overseeing the latest fire sale by the Miami Marlins.

Frankly, he had no real options beyond dumping MVP slugger Giancarlo Stanton and the worst contract in sports history on his former team . Jeter would probably serve his new team well in the long run by unloading a few more top-of-the-line players. (Christian Yelich, anyone?)

What's more surprising is how quickly Jeter has alienated those he desperately needs to win over while he puts the Marlins through a few more excruciating seasons of starting from scratch .

Namely, the ever-dwindling Marlins fans base.

Jeter has made one public-relations misstep after another since taking over as CEO in October, when a $1.2 billion sale from Jeffrey Loria to the Bruce Sherman-led partnership was approved.

AP
In this Nov. 15, 2017, file photo, Derek Jeter, chief executive officer and part owner of the Miami Marlins, talks with members of the media at the annual baseball general managers' meetings, in Orlando, Fla.

Since a 20-minute introductory news conference, Jeter has essentially declared the Miami media to be persona non grata. He did a fluff interview with the team's flagship radio station and a hastily called teleconference during the winter meetings this week after dealing Stanton to the Yankees.

That's it.

"One thing that has been consistent with me throughout my career is I do not operate through the media," Jeter said on that call.

Problem is, he needs the media to get out the message he's trying to sell to Marlins fans, who are so jaded at this point that the damage may be irreparable.

If nothing else, Jeter (or anyone not named Loria, for that matter) should've enjoyed a bit of honeymoon, even if it was his intent to dismantle the roster once again.

All he had to do was make himself accessible, turn on the charm and let everyone know he was in this for the long haul. All he had to do was make it clear that he wasn't Loria Lite, running the Marlins like a cash machine for his personal account.

There would've been grumbles, for sure, but Jeter could've pointed to the World Series champion Houston Astros as his template, a franchise that bottomed out no so long ago with three straight 100-loss seasons but always with the intent of rebuilding the farm system and setting up something the Marlins have never had in their quarter-century of existence -- long-term success.

"If you want to be sustainable as an organization, you have to be good from top to bottom," Jeter said, again from that conference call. "We're going to invest in building this organization the right way so we can year in and year out compete."

But those sage words have been drowned out by Jeter's blunders, from making only a handful of public appearances to skipping out on attending the winter meetings—even though they were being held in the same state. Instead, Jeter was spotted Monday night in a luxury box at the Dolphins NFL game. He's also turned up in Miami at an NBA game, where he was booed when shown on the video board.

Of course, the Marlins were a damaged product long before Jeter arrived.

This is a franchise that followed up two World Series titles by immediately breaking up the team, and tore up its roster a third time after Loria got a new publicly funded stadium. They'll have to do it again largely because Major League Baseball approved an overpriced sale to a group that had to scrape together every spare million just to meet Loria's ludicrous asking price.

Strasburg might skip future All-Star games; Nats host in '18

WASHINGTON (AP)—Stephen Strasburg is not so sure he wants to be an All-Star ever again.

The Washington Nationals right-hander said Sunday he is sure a change in routine for that event last season contributed to an arm injury that landed him on the disabled list, so he might just skip future Midsummer Classics.

The Nationals are hosting the 2018 edition.

"I mean, I think I felt like, at the All-Star break, it was a tough situation. Might have to rethink about if I'm going to actually pitch or not pitch in an All-Star Game -- whether I'll actually go altogether," Strasburg said at the team's annual fan festival. "That was the issue I felt like was the reason why I got hurt."

His 2017 invitation to Miami was his third career All-Star selection. He didn't appear in the game, but he still was thrown off, Strasburg said, and he left his second start following the break after only two innings.

He went on the DL for a little more than three weeks with a nerve issue in his pitching elbow.

"You're asked to throw, potentially pitch—maybe not—but not have any access or ability to really stick to your routine. Once that's over, it's like right back into it: bullpen, day off, game," Strasburg said. "I just know that little lapse, for whatever reason, it pushed me back a bit. It started making my arm hurt. My arm felt good before that, then it was, like, after that, it just didn't feel right."

He wound up going 15-4 with a 2.52 ERA in 2017, finishing third in voting for the NL Cy Young Award , an honor that went to teammate Max Scherzer.

In Washington's NL Division Series loss to the Chicago Cubs, Strasburg was 1-1 and allowed zero earned runs in 14 innings. That included his Game 4 gem, when he struck out 12 in seven innings of a 5-0 victory.

Last February, Strasburg entered spring training having come off a right arm problem at the end of 2016. Scherzer, meanwhile, was dealing with a stress fracture in a knuckle on his pitching hand.

TANHOLDINGS

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shutdown victory over Kanoa FC, 3-0.

In the first semis game, TanHoldings FC was at it early after knocking two goals in just a span of eight minutes. Martin Jambor started things off for TanHoldings as he found the back of the net in the fourth minute, while Kautong Omengkar handed the squad its second goal in the eighth.

Jambor then got his second goal in the 18th minute, while Jershwin Angeles hit the board, too for TanHoldings in the first half with his shot in the 43rd minute.

Despite a comfortable lead, TanHoldings did not slow down in the second half with siblings Martin and Lukas Jambor toying around with Okadaya's defense or the lack of it. Martin completed a hat trick with just three minutes into the second half, while his brother Lukas got the pair of goals in the 49th and 78th. Angeles and Ryan Relucio registered the two other goals for TanHoldings in the second half. Relucio broke away from his defender and hit a cross in the 67th minute, while Angeles found himself going one-on-one against Okadaya goalie Shunsuke Katagiri. Angeles managed to score in the 86th minute despite colliding against Katagiri and falling to the ground along with the Okadaya keeper.

In the second semis game, the Teen Ayuyus took a while before getting into their groove, but still came out victorious against Kanoa.

The Teen Ayuyus, who had some players who just returned to the island after a five-day training camp in Hong Kong, earned their first goal in the 23rd minute courtesy of Louie Calayag. Dai Podziewksi made it a 2-0 count for the Teen Ayuyus 10 minutes later, while Alex Park drilled the squad's last goal against the quiet Kanoa crew in the 59th minute.

Meanwhile, the Teen Ayuyus and TanHoldings FC will dispute the division crown this Saturday at 2:30pm at the Hopwood pitch with the latter having the slight edge due to its perfect record. TanHoldings won all its five matches in the elimination and handed the Teen Ayuyus their lone defeat (0-2) so far this season. TanHoldings and the Teen Ayuyus first met last Nov. 19 with Jambor and Joshua De Leon scoring the two goals for the undefeated squad.

MCS

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ping in 5, and Tawnie Manibusan contributing 4. Two other Lady Knights players made it to the board in the finals, allowing the squad to east past their sister team.

While the Catherine Toves-coached MCS 1 had multiple options on offense that helped the group got the division championship, the young MCS 2 crew were still learning their ropes on how to complete plays, resulting to only three players scoring in the game.

With MCS 2, which was mentored by John Santos, failing to counter attack against MCS 1, the eventual champion built a 17-3 halftime edge and was never threatened all throughout the finale.

The victory in the winner-take-all title match capped MCS 1's domination in the four-team competition this season. The Lady Knights were undefeated in the double round-robin regular season, getting six victories and scoring 261 points in those matches—the most among the four squads. Mt. Carmel 1 also yielded the least points in six games with 64, making the Lady Knights the only team to give up no more than 100 points in the regular season.

Mt. Carmel 2 finished second in the team standings before the playoffs with its four wins and two losses. It totaled 190 points in six games and allowed its foes to score 112. Agape Christian School and Marianas Baptist Academy finished the regular season with similar 1-5 records, but the former won the tiebreak after scoring more points, 78-73.

Agape then challenged MCS 2 for the first finals berth last Wednesday with the latter winning to advance to the championship game. MCS 1 made it an all-Lady Knights finale after a victory via forfeiture over the cellar dweller MBA.

KOBLERVILLE

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School.

Besides WSR and Koblerville, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School and Mt. Carmel also advanced to the semifinal round, which will be played today at the Hopwood pitch. GTC marched into the Final Four after getting a 2-0-2 record and it will duel WSR for one of the two finals berth in the division. Mt. Carmel was the last semis qualifier after posting a 1-0-3 card and will have a tougher assignment as it faces Koblerville in the other Final Four pairing.

In the boys division, Mt. Carmel emerged as the No. 1 seed for finishing the elimination with a 4-1-0 mark.

The Knights capped their unbeaten record with a 4-1 triumph over Koblerville last Thursday at the Hopwood pitch. Markus Toves was again at the forefront of Mt. Carmel's offense after making a hat trick against the Umangs. He scored his goals in succession with the first one coming in the eighth minute and the last two in the 18th and 24th.

Monico Claridades nailed the lone goal for Koblerville, which missed the playoffs as it ranked fifth after the elimination round with its 1-0-4 record.

GTC, WSR, and Garapan completed the semis cast in the boys division. GTC had a 4-0-1 mark after the elimination, winning its last match versus Garapan, 2-1, while WSR clobbered the eliminated Kagman in the other game last Thursday, 9-0. GTC and WSR will dispute the finals ticket today, while the same prize is at stake in the Mt. Carmel-Garapan tiff.

Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Basketball League Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mt. Carmel School's Angelo Factor, right, uses a screen from teammate Jaydon Tenorio, left, to slip past the defense of Grace Christian Academy's Amir Abes during the first quarter of their boys high school division title game in the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Basketball League last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Mt. Carmel School's Matthew Richardson, right, unloads a long jumper in front of Grace Christian Academy's Amir Abes.

Grace Christian Academy's Matthew Mamaril is hounded by Mt. Carmel School defenders.

Mt. Carmel School's Kelvin Cepeda, right, pulls up for a one-hander against Grace Christian Academy's Seung Jun Baek.

Grace Christian Academy's Jether Espanola fumbles, while two Mt. Carmel School defenders keep a close eye on him.

Grace Christian Academy's Kevin Song, left, is fouled by Mt. Carmel School's Henry Yu.

Mt. Carmel School's Seok Jun Yun, right, takes off for a point-blank shot.

Grace Christian Academy's Do Jin Choi, left, challenges the defense of Mt. Carmel School's Seok Jun Yun.

Pats rally past Steelers for AFC East title

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TanHoldings vs Teen Ayuyus

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

TanHoldings Football Club and the Teen Ayuyus arranged their championship showdown in the Division A of the M-League after easing past their respective semis opponents last Sunday at the Hopwood Middle School Field.

TanHoldings FC was the first team to march into the finals following a 9-0 demolition of Okadaya in the opening Final Four match. The Teen Ayuyus then made it a battle between the Top 2 finishers in the elimination after securing the second finals berth via their similar

See TANHOLDINGS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
TanHoldings Football Club's Lukas Jambor, left, dribbles past Okadaya's Kosuke Kimura during their semis game in the Division A of the M-League last Sunday at the Hopwood Middle School Field.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mt. Carmel School 1's Annalei Santos, center, pulls up for a jumper against two Mt. Carmel School 2 defenders during the first half of their title game in the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Basketball League last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

MCS 1 triumphs over MCS 2

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mt. Carmel School 1 won a family affair in the girls high school division finals in the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Basketball League after outclassing MCS 2, 27-13, last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Annalei Santos top-scored in MCS 1's title win after recording 8 points. She drew a lot of support from her teammates with Quina Flores adding 6, Louisa Hahn chip-

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Koblerville, Mt. Carmel lead ISL semifinalists

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Koblerville Elementary School and Mt. Carmel School topped the list of Final Four qualifiers in the 2017 NMIFA Fall U11 Interscholastic Soccer League.

Koblerville clinched a semis berth in the girls division of the competition after placing No. 1 in the team standings at the end of the elimination. The Umangs finished the round-robin contest with a 3-1-0 win-draw-loss record—the same mark that William S. Reyes Elementary School earned. Koblerville, however, won the tie-break because it scored more goals in four games, 11-5.

The first semifinalists got three goals in their final elimination match last Thursday against Mt. Carmel at the Hopwood Middle School Field. Megan Elayda, Aleeza Castro, and Tanaya Willy scored the three goals in Koblerville shutout win over the Lady Knights.

WSR also had its final game before the playoffs last Thursday and won via forfeiture against Kagman Elementary

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Koblerville Elementary School and Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School players exchange high-fives after their game in the 2017 NMIFA Fall U11 Interscholastic Soccer League at the KES Field last week. Also in the photo is referee Jeralyn Castillo, second right.